



SHILRICK THE DRUMMER





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SHILRICK, THE DRUMMER
OR, LOYAL AND TRUE

“ Through Erin’s Isle to sport awhile
Where joys sublime are beaming,
We’ll take a flight while landscapes bright
In beauty’s garb are gleaming
Mid sunny vales, through flowery dales,
And fields renowned in story,
Tho’ nought remains but barren plains
To tell of former glory.

.

And as each scene of emerald green
In fairest tints is glancing,
Or mountain stream, in golden beam,
Through rocky glen is dancing,
The tuneful lays of other days
Shall tinge our souls with sadness,
Or cause the tear to disappear,
And fill each heart with gladness.”

T. C. S. CORRY, M.D., F.R.C.S.L.



JULIA AGNES FRASER.

In Costume worn at an Irish Fancy Fair.

From a Photograph by JOHN HAWKE, Plymouth.

SHILRICK, THE DRUMMER

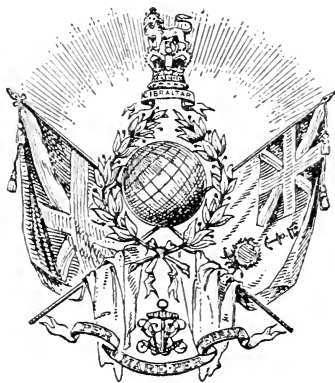
OR, LOYAL AND TRUE

A Romance of the Irish Rebellion of 1798

BY

JULIA AGNES FRASER

Author of "Dermot O'Donoghue; or, the Stranger from Belfast." "Patrick's Vow; or a Rival's Revenge." "Pat of Mullingar; or, an Irish Lothario." "Hubert's Pride." "A Slight Mistake." "Barrington's Busby; or, Weathering the Admiral." "Skeletons in the Cupboard; or, the Captain's Troubles." "Court Lovers; or, the Sentinel of the King's Guard." "The Star-Spangled Banner; or, the Far West." &c., &c., &c.



IN THREE VOLUMES—VOLUME I

REMINGTON AND COMPANY, LIMITED

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AND SYDNEY

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Fraser

v. 1

TO MY DEAR FATHER,

MAJOR-GENERAL SIMON FRASER, J.P.

(LATE COLONEL 2ND COMMANDANT OF THE ROYAL MARINE LIGHT
INFANTRY),

—WHOSE LOVING SYMPATHY HAS CHEERED ME

IN MY EFFORTS, AND INSPIRED ME WITH HOPE, THROUGH

THE SHADOW AND SUNSHINE OF A LITERARY CAREER,—

AND TO

THE GALLANT CORPS TO WHICH HE BELONGED,

THIS NOVEL IS MOST AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY

A DAUGHTER OF THE CORPS.

PREFACE.

I would here beg those who honour me by reading the following chapters, clearly to understand, that this novel is purely *a romance* ; the plot, incidents, and chief characters therein being, for the most part, the creations and fancies of my own imagination ; and for these, therefore, I would claim the generous licence accorded to the novelist and the poet ; but, with the threads of my fictitious story, there are interwoven, from time to time, *real facts*, and I answer only for the accuracy of dates, descriptions of character, and general details of place, scene, and incident connected with those facts—Historical and Political—relating to a period when the affairs of Ireland were as a dark and tangled web, through the meshes of which shone forth, bright and beautiful, records of the undaunted courage, clear intellect, and noble self-sacrifice which characterized the lives of many of those true sons of Erin, the memory of whose revered and honoured names is still—though nearly a century has passed—fresh and green in the hearts of the Irish people. I would pray you, kind reader, to accept my novel as it stands, with all its faults—a mingled yarn of truth and fiction.

I have not attempted to impress you with “style” in my literary work. I have introduced no elaborate language. I

have sought only to impart *human interest* to my story, and have represented, chiefly, ordinary human beings, with all their failings, and their loveable qualities, their joys and their sorrows—such fellow creatures as we may meet daily amid the lights and shadows of life; and I know that, although my little hero is but a child of my own fancy, yet his spirit lives, and is still to be found in our army and navy, in many a brave young soldier or sailor lad, who has proved a credit to the Service and an honour to his Country.

JULIA AGNES FRASER.

SHILRICK, THE DRUMMER ;

OR, LOYAL AND TRUE.

THE PROLOGUE.—FRANCE.

“ Oh ! Erin, my country, though strangers may roam,
The hills and the valleys I once called my home,
Thy lakes and thy mountains no longer I see,
Yet warmly as ever my heart beats for thee.
Oh ! Cuishla machree ! my heart beats for thee.
Erin, oh, Erin ! my heart beats for thee.”

CHARLES JEFFREYS.

The old French chateau, the residence of the ancient and noble family of De Montmorenci, was situated in one of the most beautiful and picturesque parts of France, surrounded by gardens, parks, and shrubberies, the fair landscape was rendered still fairer by the accompaniment of an extensive artificial lake, on the surface of which appeared miniature islands, bright with verdure and blossom, and where the stately swan might be seen gracefully and slowly wending its way on the calm waters, gliding in and out among the groups of water lilies, or pausing to rest beneath the trees on the margin of the lake.

A flight of steps, with exquisitely-carved balustrades, led

down to the lake from the wide terrace, on which were growing, in rich profusion, bright flowers and shrubs, while many charming niches were graced by statues of rare value.

A small white, fairy-like boat was anchored at the foot of the terrace steps, and rocked gently to and fro on the calm water.

All the surroundings of the fair landscape betokened the wealth and the taste of the owner, and showed the loving care that must have been bestowed on house and land.

On a quiet, still night in early Spring, near the close of the last century, the beauty of the scene was yet more enhanced by the clear, bright rays of a glorious moonlight.

There was scarcely a breath of air to stir the leaves of the tall, stately trees, growing on the shores of the lake, seeming to guard, like sentinels, the deep, still waters, the branches casting weird, fantastic shadows on all around.

So calm, so beautiful was the scene, so soft and still the night air, sweet with the perfume of flowers and blooming shrubs, which had been warmed into life and beauty by the mild climate and an unusually bright, balmy Spring ; so strangely mysterious, so deep and intense was the silence that reigned supreme, one might have wondered if aught could break the solemn stillness, or if Nature, in that fair spot, had for ever gone to rest ; if the forms of the brave gallants and the gentle dames, who were wont to haunt the fair scene, would ever again tread the wide terraces, or wander beneath the dark, o'ershadowing trees.

A broad ray of clear and brilliant moonlight fell across the terrace, and gleamed on the lake beneath, until its waters seemed like one vast sheet of shimmering silver.

At last the silence was broken by the sound of a quick, active step ; and the form of a young man appeared, ruthlessly, though unwittingly, breaking through the brilliant bar of light. Owen Maguire, for such was the name of the intruder, was an Irish servant, who had accompanied his young master, Morven O'Neill, an Irish gentleman, to France, as a faithful attendant and follower of his somewhat varied fortunes. The livery worn by Owen—that of a gentleman's servant of the last century—was in many respects decidedly the worse for wear, or, as he expressed it, in the military

phraseology of his master, "it had seen good service," albeit it had once been handsome, as befitted the attendant of the proud O'Neill.

Owen did his best to remedy small defects, by the extra attention he bestowed upon his powdered hair,—a remnant of former grandeur, and the careful arrangement of his queue. The young Irishman possessed a bright and pleasant face, with a thoroughly good, honest expression. The colleens in the Emerald Isle had been wont to admire him exceedingly, and to observe among themselves, that "sure the bhoys was always illigant an' thasty in his clothes," and Owen, knowing this, was nothing loath, so far as his own and his master's chequered fortunes and reduced funds would permit, to keep up his character for "thaste an illigance."

On the evening in question, as he came quickly along the moonlit terrace, his merry face was clouded with a thoughtful and troubled expression, as he gazed anxiously in the direction of the chateau, in the windows of which suddenly appeared brilliant lights; and the sounds of mirth and music, softened by distance, fell on the ear of the solitary watcher. It was as if the presence of Owen had broken the strange spell of silence that had but a few moments before reigned supreme o'er the scene.

"Sure, Misther O'Neill, isn't here yet—I hope 'tis not long, he'll be av comin'," murmured Owen, anxiously; "I haven't set me two eyes on him this day, at all, at all. Sure, it isn't changin' his mind he'll be, about matin' her ladyship here;—faith then, 'tis all out I am enthirely, if there's been anny other arrangements made betwane thim—I hope it's no harm that's come to the masther, an' mesilf not near. 'Twas bad luck his honour fallin' in love wid the young lady in the big house beyant—it's thrue she's beautiful an' bright as anny sunbame; but 'tis the masther might have had the choice av the best ladies in the ould counthry, for isn't it himself that's the flower av nobility enthirely, moor power to him! But, annyhow," Owen added, with a sigh of satisfaction, "this is the last matin' his honour will have wid her ladyship, for he *must* lave France this night. Bedad, 'tis news I have *this* thime! Och!" he muttered, glancing angrily in the direction of the chateau, "there's the lights an' the music; the divarshions

has commenced. Oh, the maraughters ! bad luck to them, for the black-hearted villains they are ! They'd be afther harmin' the young masther, would they ? Troth, I'll be aven wid thim yet, so I will !"

So absorbed was Owen in his vows of vengeance against some person, or persons in the chateau, that he did not hear the approach of his master, for whom, but a moment before, he had been so anxiously watching. Morven O'Neill was a young man of strikingly handsome presence and possessing a face so perfect in feature and contour as to merit the appellation of beautiful ; eyes ever changing in expression and constantly varying in colour, from a brilliant hazel to a dark grey, at one moment appearing soft and dreamy, at another, when roused to anger or excitement, flashing and gleaming as if lighted by some hidden fire. The mouth, like the eyes, was changeful in expression, the firm lips which, when in repose, betokened such indomitable will, courage, and pride, could part in the sweetest, tenderest of smiles, lighting up the whole face like a ray of sunshine. The dark brown hair was gathered in a queue beneath the steeple-crowned, gray beaver hat, which threw a soft shade over the delicate and refined features. Graceful and elegant in figure, and in manner, the former being shown to great advantage in the closely-fitting claret-coloured body-coat of that period, with the cape reaching to the shoulders, while the high riding boots suited well his soldierly bearing.

There was in the nature of Morven O'Neill a strange mingling of pride and power, truth and tenderness ; there was about him such a wonderful, subtle fascination, that few with whom he came in contact, and none who really knew the character and the heart of the man, could resist. At the moment, however, when he appeared on the terrace, there was a passing cloud of anger and impatience on his brow, as he discovered that he was not alone.

"Owen !" he exclaimed, hastily, "*you* here ?"

"Sure, sir—I—I belave I am, sir," replied Owen, somewhat taken aback by the sudden appearance of his master.

"How came you here ?" asked Morven, sharply.

"Sure 'twas to mate yer honour," replied Owen, innocently, "'tis many a thime I've followed yerself, an' sthayed at a dis-

tance, out av sight, till I've sane ye lave the place safe an' unmolested."

"*Followed* me, Owen!" indignantly exclaimed Morven.

"Aisy now, masther dear, don't be angry, sir," replied Owen, "sure it's yersilf that's the brave gentleman enthirely, an' always coortin' dhanger, an' it isn't Owen Maguire that'll kape at home aisly an' quiet, when there's maybes harm comin' to yer honour."

On hearing Owen's explanation, the gloom on Morven's brow cleared, and gave place to the rare, tender smile, as he replied, kindly, laying his hand on Owen's shoulder:

"Ah, my faithful Owen! It was wrong of me, even for one moment to cherish any feeling of anger or suspicion towards you, the best, the truest friend I have in all the world."

"Och! masther darlin', now don't be afther throublin' about mesilf, at all, at all; sure 'tis losin' thime we are, sthayin' here, an' it's the great news I have for ye. I've been mighty anxious wid the fear ye'd be changin' yer mind an' not come here this night. It's mesilf that's been watchin' for yer honour all dhay."

"Well, Owen, what are your tidings?" inquired Morven, anxiously.

"Troth thin, 'tis the mighty big plot the gintlemen at yondher castle have agin yer honour," replied Owen, earnestly; "sure 'tis some thime ago I began to suspect thim. Wan dhay I met the guardian av the young lady that sthays up beyant there, and he had a frind wid him, an ould gintleman, that's afther coortin' her ladyship—woorse luck to him! Whin they'd sane mesilf they sthopped, an' says wan av thim, 'Ye're Misther O'Neill's servant?' 'Troth an' I am! says I, 'an' proud to be that same.' 'He'll be a wealthy gintleman in his own counthry?' says he. 'Och! *wealthy* is it,' says I, 'begorrah! then yer honours have niver sane sich wealth an' sthathe.' 'Lands an' esthates, an' a good rint roll, I suppose?' says he. 'Faith, ye may say that, sir,' says I, 'tis the big paper it would thake to make out that same rint roll.' 'An' he'll have fine hoorses, I suppose?' axes the other ould gintleman. 'Niver a lie in it, sir,' says I, 'sure there isn't the sthables in *this* counthry that would

ould his honour's illigant sthud.' 'I wondher he doesn't show a little more sthyle here, then, when he's so wealthy,' said wan of them. 'Och!' says I, 'tis Misther O'Neill is too much of a gintleman to be flashin' his riches in the eyes av thim that's poorer than himself.'"

"Oh! Owen, Owen," said Morven, smiling, in spite of a most praiseworthy effort to be grave, "you should not have deceived those gentlemen," then, with a sigh, he added, slowly and sadly, "you know well that it is many a long day since I have possessed even *one* horse, and as for lands and estates, why I am but a poor, lonely exile, far from my home and country, without a single acre to call my own."

"Well, masther darlin'," replied Owen, proudly, "sure if ye *haven't* the lands and the wealth, ye *ought* to have thim and where's the differ, at all, at all? An faith, if yer honour would only give ordhers in Ulster, an' thim parts av Wicklow that belonged to yer own pable, bedad, there's sorra wan that would pay a cronagh-bawn av rint to anny other landlord."

"I know that well, Owen; but those fair lands are no longer mine, they have been *confiscated*," said Morven, bitterly, "ay, *wrested* from my ancestors, whose forefathers had held them for centuries, and I am too proud to take back even what I know to be my own, in such a manner. I feel most deeply the devotion of our old tenants in Ulster and Wicklow, but," he added, earnestly, "the time is coming, and I hope not far distant, when, I, as well as many another weary, sorrowful exile, shall *win* back our rights and our lands, and then—then Owen, I shall be content to spend my life in the country, and among the people who will ever be dear to my heart."

"An' troth, its a proud an' happy dhay that'll be in many a home," said Owen.

"But, tell me, Owen, did these gentlemen ask you any more questions about me?" inquired Morven.

"Sure an' they did, yer honour; the ould wan, bad luck to him, axed if I could tell him what brought ye to this counthry at all, at all; so says I, 'Sure, it's Misther O'Neill was always fond av thravellin' an divartin' himself, enthirely.' 'It's a quare thime for an Irish gintleman to be thravellin' an' divartin'

himself whin his counthry is in sich a distharbed sthate,' says he. 'Maybes he'd a thrifle av a raison for lavin' Ireland,' says the ould villain. 'That's thrue for ye, sir,' says I, 'he thought he'd be after havin' a look at the hoorses hereabouts, hearing there was some illigant bastes for sale.' 'Oh!' says the ould gntleman, 'there's a daler here who has always a very good choice.' 'I sane thim, sir,' says I. 'Did yez see the bay mare?' says he. 'Yes, sir,' says I, 'tis well enough, barrin' that its fore legs is white.' 'Then there's the grey hoorse,' says he agin. 'Tis a nate enough baste, yer honour, but sure its neck is too stiff enthirely, an' its paces isn't aisy,' says I. 'An' the chestnut,' says he. 'An illigant animal, barrin' the white sthar on the forehead,' says I. 'Well,' says he, 'there's the black hoorse, an' the crame-coloured mare.' 'Sure the crame-coloured mare hasn't blood enough, yer honour, an the black hoorse has a thrifle av a halt,' says I. 'Then I see nothin' but the hunters for yer master. There's six av *thim*, all fine animals,' says he. 'Sure, sir,' said I, 'they're all out too tall to be plasin' to Misther O'Neill, an' their points isn't perfect.' Wid that the ould gntleman said that my masther must be mighty hard to plaze. 'Sorra lie in it,' said I, 'an' troth, who wouldn't be particular if not the O'Neill, an' small blame to him.' 'Perhaps the prices is rayther high,' says wan of thim. 'Prices is it?' says I. 'Faith it isn't the *prices* that would make anny difference to Misther O'Neill.'"

"But, my good Owen," said Morven, "you know well that I have not even been thinking of buying horses, nor have I the means to do so."

"Thru for ye, sir," replied Owen, "but yer honour *will* be thinkin' av it whin ye get back yer lands, an' it's well to be in good thime wid the likes of thim things. But, oh! masther dear!" he added, hastily, "sure I do be forgettin'. Oh! why have I been kapin' ye talkin' when there's dhanger every moment ye sthay here. Ye must lave this counthry—at wanst—this very night; I've iverythin' ready for yez. An' down in the valley beyant, hidden away among the threes, there's the flaetest hoorse that iver set foot on the ground, waitin' for ye. I got the loan av it from wan that's to be thrusted enthirely, an' I'll tell yer honour where to

lave it aftherwards—but come—oh, come away from here, sir !”

“My good Owen,” exclaimed Morven, in astonishment at Owen’s sudden excitement, “you have surely taken leave of your senses ; what is the matter ?”

“Matther is it ? sure there’s plenty the matther, Misther O’Neill,” replied Owen. ’Tis yer life an’ yer liberty that’s in danger. I’ll tell yer honour all when we’re safe away from this place.”

“No, no,” answered Morven, impatiently, “I am not to be frightened away like a coward or a child, I do not stir from this spot until I hear your reasons.”

“Well thin, Misther O’Neill dear, sure ’twas from the ould nurse av the purty young lady, yer honour’s coortin’ up at the big house beyant, that I heard everythin’. ’Tis little English or Irish she can spake, but she tould me ye were in danger. The ould villain that has the care av her ladyship found out that it’s in love wid yerself she is, an’ sure as he’d arranged that the other ould gintleman that’s always wid him was to marry her, that wasn’t convanient, d’ye see, sir ; but,” continued Owen, triumphantly, “the sorra bit would she look the same road he was, whin she’d sane yer honour. An’ small blame to her ladyship, for sure where’ll she find a handsomer gintleman than yerself, at all, at all ? *That’s* the raison yer honour was niver axed up to the Castle this long while, an’ the ould maraurther that’s coortin’ the young lady, tould the other wan that if ye weren’t put out av the way somehow, they would niver be able to manage her ladyship, for she’d niver marry *him* as long as yer honour was livin’ an’ at liberty. An’ so they settled it betwane them, that they’d murther ye or get yez into some prison the first thime they came on ye. An’ oh ! masther darlin’,” added Owen, anxiously, “they’ve found out that ye do be matin’ her ladyship here, an’ maybes, they’re aven watching ye now. Oh, come—come away at wanst, before it’s too late !”

“What !” exclaimed O’Neill, indignantly, “and allow the lady to come here to meet me, find me absent, having broken my tryst and left her to the mercy of these two unscrupulous men in the heat of their anger ? Besides, Owen,

I have no intention of flying the country in any such cowardly fashion; I shall remain in this neighbourhood until the time I originally intended to leave France, which will, however, be very soon now, as this morning I received orders from General Holt to return to Ireland in a few days to take command of a party of men, who are at present in hiding among the Wicklow mountains. They call themselves 'The Bold Boys of Wicklow.' So you see, Owen, we shall not be able to remain here much longer."

"An' moor power to the Bhoys and the General that'll be the manes av gettin' yer honour away from furrin parts, and back to the ould country; for, bedad, its the divil that's in the furriners in *this* place, annyhow!" said Owen, emphatically.

"General Holt also tells me," continued O'Neill, "that a Battalion of the Marines—the old corps to which I once belonged—has been sent to Ireland, and they are at present quartered at the old Barracks at Glencree. It appears that the boys are somewhat anxious about this, as these soldiers are likely to give them some trouble, the Marines being always a very loyal corps. One of the drummers, who has been sent with them to Glencree, happens to be Shilrick O'Toole, a brother of young Kerry O'Toole. As you know, he was born and brought up near Glencree, and every pass and cave among the Wicklow Mountains is as familiar to him as to either of us. I am sorry to hear also, that my old friend and comrade, Captain Annesley, is with the Marines; but," added Morven, anxiously, "what troubles me most of all is, that the officer in command of the Battalion is none other than my own uncle, Colonel Corrie."

"Och! wirra, wirra!" said Owen, sadly. "That *is* bad news for yer honour!"

"I do not think," continued Morven, "that Shilrick the Drummer would betray us if he could possibly avoid it, but I know military discipline so well, that I have no doubt the boy will be compelled to do so, indeed I think it possible that he has been sent with the Marines to Wicklow for that purpose. My uncle must not know that I have command of these 'Bold Boys,'" added Morven, thoughtfully, "so

I have decided to adopt the name of *Michael Cluny*, when I return to Ireland ; it will be less disagreeable for my uncle, as well as for myself, and now, Owen, you see I must leave here in a few days at the farthest."

"Oh ! masther dear," said Owen, earnestly, " sure ye'll not be waitin' all that thime. Oh ! come, yer honour ; lave this place now, let us be sthartin' at wanst."

"Impossible !" replied O'Neill, quietly but firmly ; " you forget, Owen, I have just told you that I have an appointment with a lady. I shall not leave this spot until I have seen her."

"Oh ! sure, Misther O'Neill, what is she at all, that ye should risk this danger for *her* sake ? Oh, yer honour ! don't be mindin' her—only come away, an' let us niver set foot in this avil place anny moor."

"It is no use, Owen ; I have determined to see Mademoiselle Estelle de Montmorenci once again before I leave France."

"Then, Heaven help us !" murmured Owen to himself, "for if ye've set ye're mind on doin' annythin', there's nothin' in this world that'll turn ye from it. But, masther, dear," he added, turning again to Morven, "if yer heart's set on her that way, then sure it isn't yersilf that would be come over wid thim furriners, ye wouldn't be lettin' *thin* sthand in yer way ?"

"What can I do, Owen ?"

For a moment Owen looked at his master without speaking, then approaching nearer to O'Neill, and with a merry smile on his face, he said, slyly, "Ah sure, an' is it an Irish gentleman I hear axin' such a quistion ? Why ! thake her ladyship away wid ye, av coorse, now at wanst, *run away wid her*, Misther Morven."

"Do not fancy I have not thought of that, as well as you, Owen," replied Morven, smiling, "but you forget, where could I take her ? What home have I to offer her ?"

"Sorra wan that I know av, Misther Morven ! but sure it's not thim thrifles she'd be afther thinkin' about, if she's in love wid yersilf," answered Owen.

"I do not know," continued Morven, thoughtfully, "where I could even find any priest who would marry us. The

laws of this country, too, are somewhat different to our own."

"Laws, is it!" replied Owen, contemptuously. "Sure it isn't an O'Neill that would be bounden by the laws av this or anny other counthry, an' as to finding a praste that'll marry ye, sure we'll manage that aisy enough, whin we're safe away from here."

"No," replied Morven, determinedly, "we must be *sure* of that before we leave this spot."

On hearing O'Neill's determination, Owen was decidedly perplexed as to the next best course to be pursued; he took off his hat, brushing it carefully with his coat-sleeve, he minutely examined the lining, as if to gain some inspiration therefrom, taking an occasional sidelong glance at his master. At last, after a doubtful shake of the head, he turned once more to speak to Morven.

"Troth then, 'tis that same bothers mesilf enthirely, sir."

"If Father Antonelli were at home again," said Morven, anxiously, "but it is useless to think of him, he has been away in Italy for some time."

"His riverince *is* home agin, yer honour," exclaimed Owen, in great delight. "Sure I heard that his ould housekeeper was makin' preparations for his return some days ago."

"Ah! that is well. Father Antonelli was one of my father's best friends—we will go to him. He will do it, and will no doubt be able to make all right for us."

"Niver a lie in it," replied Owen, excitedly, "'tis his riverince that'll do it in illigant sthyle for yer honour!"

"But there is still the question," continued Morven, thoughtfully, "where am I to find a home for her? General Holt makes no preparations for the brides of the officers under his command; and the mountains would scarcely be a fitting home for one so delicately reared."

"That's thrue for ye, sir," replied Owen, "but, sure, there's yer honour's ould nurse, Misthress Kinahan; it's hersilf that would give the two eyes out av her head to sarve ye, anny dhay, masther dear. 'Tis a fine dacent place she has, an' not far from the mountains. Thake her ladyship there at first, annyhow."

For a few moments Morven remained silent, weighing in his own mind the advantages, dangers, and difficulties of the scheme proposed by Owen ; at last, with a half despairing sigh, he said, doubtfully :

"Owen, this is absurd ! mere romantic nonsense ! Mademoiselle de Montmorenci would never consent to accompany me under such circumstances. Think of the hardships she might have to endure, the life she would have to lead ; so different from anything to which she has ever been accustomed. No, no," he added, sorrowfully, "she would not come with me."

"Och !" exclaimed Owen, contemptuously. "Then it's no love she has for yez at all, at all ; an' 'tis yer honour that's betther widout her."

"And I am not sure," continued O'Neill, "that I should be justified in asking her to consent to such an arrangement. No, I fear it will not do, Owen."

"Sure, it isn't faint-hearted yer honour's gettin' ? Begorrah ! thin 'tis the first O'Neill iver *I* heard av who was that way, ayther in love or war."

While Owen was speaking, Morven, who had been anxiously glancing from time to time in the direction of the chateau, now perceived Estelle de Montmorenci coming towards them.

"Hush, Owen !" he exclaimed, hastily, "she comes—she comes."

"Then bad luck to it," muttered Owen, hopelessly, to himself, "sure I'll niver get him away safe now."

Slowly and unwillingly Owen left his master to meet his lady-love ; but he did not go far away, remaining within call, in case his services might be required, or that O'Neill might be in danger—a faithful and devoted sentinel.

CHAPTER II.

"Go where glory waits thee,
 But while fame elates thee,
 Oh ! still remember me.
 When the praise thou meetest
 To thine ear is sweetest,
 Oh ! then remember me.
 Other arms may press thee,
 Dearer friends caress thee,
 All the joys that bless thee,
 Sweeter far may be ;
 But when friends are nearest,
 And when joys are dearest,
 Oh ! then remember me."

MOORE.

When Owen Maguire said that Estelle de Montmorenci was "bright and beautiful as any sunbeam," he certainly did not, in any way, overrate her charms. Singularly fair she appeared on this evening, as she came along the terrace of the old chateau, to keep tryst with her ardent young lover, Morven O'Neill, the Irish patriot.

The delicate, ethereal style of her beauty seemed in perfect harmony with the scene, the hour, and, indeed, all her surroundings. Beneath the moon's soft rays she appeared still more *spirituelle*. Her long, fair hair, which was raised high above her forehead, after the fashion of the time, and simply confined by a jewelled band, had been allowed to fall in a glittering, golden shower over her shoulders and far below her waist, and was covered, but not concealed, by a long, flowing white veil of priceless lace. The moonlight played strange freaks among the glistening, shimmering folds of her long, white satin robe, at one moment casting on it soft, grey shadows, and the next investing it with all the

hues of the opal, and gleaming with a brilliant, scintillating light on the jewelled girdle with its long gold cords and tassels which encircled her waist, and on the jewels at her shoulders, which confined her long, loose flowing sleeves.

Estelle's face did not bear the insipid expression nor the pale colouring that is so often the accompaniment of pale, golden hair. Neither were her eyes of the cold, pale blue that is so frequently associated with *blonde* beauty. They were dark and full of expression ; her long eyelashes and her eyebrows being of some shades darker than her hair, also added considerably to the beauty and the character of her face.

Such was the fair vision that met the eyes of Morven O'Neill when he hastened to meet Estelle, as she descended the flight of stone steps from the higher terrace.

"Estelle! my own beloved!" exclaimed Morven, as he tenderly embraced her.

"Ah! Morven," said Estelle, hurriedly, speaking in English, but with a strong foreign accent and idiom, "my own true Morven! but I cannot stay, I do come even now to bid you fly from here—from dis country. Oh! my love, your life, it is in danger—and indeed, I do only now come to say farewell for ever."

"Nay, Estelle; it shall not be so," replied Morven, determinedly, "it is true that I must leave France in a few days, for I have orders from General Holt to return to Ireland; where," he added, enthusiastically, "there is glorious work before me, and oh, Estelle! I shall return to you again in better, happier times; when I can lay at your feet the laurels of a patriot, and claim from you, with pride and honour, the reward of my faithful love."

"Oh, Morven!" replied Estelle, with deep sorrow, "would dat dis were so; why spread you before me in such bright picture de joys which might have been, but which I do fear shall never now be realized."

"And why, Estelle?" asked Morven, jealously, "has some brighter star appeared in your path and eclipsed the light of the poor son of Erin?"

"No, Morven," replied Estelle, earnestly, "indeed, indeed, dat could *never* be; but, oh! my love, my love, I have sad

news to tell to you. Do you hear de sounds of gaiety—of de mirth and de revelry ? ”

“ Well, Estelle,” asked Morven, “ what of that ?—your guardian is hospitable enough when he chooses (though he soon tired of extending that hospitality to *me*). It is no uncommon thing for the walls of the old chateau to ring with merry voices and music.”

For a moment Estelle paused ere she replied to Morven, when she did so her eyes were filled with tears, her voice was trembling with passionate emotion.

“ Morven, Morven ! you do not comprehend. To-night it is de celebrating of my betrothal.”

“ Your what, Estelle ? ” demandly Morven, sternly.

“ Oh, my love ! ” answered Estelle, sorrowfully, “ now you do know, it must be de long farewell. Dis night, in one hour from de time I am here, I shall be betrothed to de Duc de Ferrière. To-morrow—ah, me ! ” she continued, mournfully, “ to-morrow I shall be married to him.”

“ Betrothed ! married ! ” cried Morven, passionately, “ and to *him* ! the Duke de Ferrière ! A man old enough to be your grandfather ; a heartless *roué* ! Then you have been unable to resist the glamour of this man’s title—his fair lands—the gold and jewels that he can shower upon you ? Oh, Estelle ! Estelle ! You have *never* loved me ! ”

“ Ah, my own Morven ! ” said Estelle, despairingly, “ you shall listen to me. My guardian, he has discovered our love, and dat is the reason way he does look coldly now on de one who was once a favoured guest. He is near ruin, and his friend de Duc de Ferrière, he has promised if I do marry him, dat he shall save my guardian. I was not told he had so promised, but my maid, Annette, she did overhear all dere conversations and dere hateful plots. My guardian—he has over my fortune de complete control ; I may never touch it if I do marry without his consent. I do care not at all for dat, for my *own* sake, but for *yours*, my Morven—you have often told me dat you were poor—I could never marry you, because I should not be a burden on you whom I so truly love.”

“ And so you would become the wife of this *Duke*,” cried

Morven, indignantly, "to secure *your own* fortune. Oh Estelle ! Estelle !"

"It is not so, Morven ! it is not so," replied Estelle, passionately. "I have cared not for de threats—for de persuasions—none had de power to move me—until—until it was your life dey did threaten to take. Ah ! my love, my love ! dey did tell me dat you should be seized by de Government, and put into de prison for having made de conspiracy against it."

Here Estelle completely broke down, and her delicate frame was shaken with a perfect storm of sorrow, nor was it easy even for Morven to pacify the anxious and almost heart-broken girl.

"But, Estelle !" remonstrated Morven, as he protectingly threw his arm over her shoulder and drew her closer to him.

"Nay," continued Estelle, "I know dat you have not made de conspiracy ; but dese, dey are unscrupulous men, dey are even now de one wid de oder preparing some false tale, dat shall bring you to de dark ruin. It was said to me, if I did not yield to dere wishes at once, your life—it should pay de forfeit—and you—ah, it is you, Morven, who are dearer to me beside all else in de whole wide world—I consented—and I to-night shall be betrothed. Oh," she added, clasping her hands in despair, while the tears flowed down her pale cheeks, "my poor father, my own loving father—if he had only known de cruel misery he was to bring on de head of his poor sorrowing child, by placing over her, as guardian, such a bad man ; but he did think dat he was all good and honourable."

"And, Estelle," asked Morven, sternly, "of what value do you think my life would be when bought at such a sacrifice ?"

"Morven !" replied Estelle, gravely, looking up at him with earnest sorrowful eyes, "a patriot's life is de property of his country—you are even now wanted in Ireland ; de loss of your liberty, at dis time, might be to your people full of evil consequence. Your life, it is not your own to throw away in dis manner, at your pleasure. Oh ! go, while dere is yet time. It is de glory dat awaits you, dat calls you from me ; but do not forget me, my Morven—ah ! you will think sometimes of me when far away ?"

she asked, as her tears fell fast on Morven's hand which she had grasped tightly in hers, "and," she continued, "de memory of me shall be dearer to you, when you all dis calmly remember, and feel dat it was in saving your life, your poor Estelle was of service to de beautiful Erin you do love so well—de country dat now I shall never, never see. Hark!" she exclaimed, suddenly, her clasp on Morven's hand tightening. "Do you hear de music? Do you see my dress? All is to be ready for de hateful ceremony—ah! should I not rather call it de sacrifice?—I am decked in jewels—I am robed in satin— but oh! what ghastly mockery is all. To morrow I shall in a living tomb be buried, but I can bear it—I will try to bear it, wid de brave heart, if I do know dat *you* are safe—far, far away from here, and de wild ocean rolling between you and your bitter, cruel enemies."

"Then it must roll between *us*, and hope and love too, Estelle," replied Morven, sadly, "but why should I leave you, child?" he demanded, impetuously. "Do you think that I am such a coward that I shall fly the country in terror because these men threaten my life?"

"Ah no, Morven!" replied Estelle, sadly, "but you will not add to all my sorrow—my misery—de agony of feeling every moment dat de one I love is in danger. Oh! my Morven! indeed, indeed we *must* say farewell—now, and for ever." Estelle, with her fair head hidden on Morven's shoulder, here gave way to another burst of bitter weeping. For some moments he watched her in silence, feeling that any effort to assuage her grief would be, at that moment, unavailing, and perhaps thinking that it were well that the sorrow-laden heart should find relief in tears.

At last, with his strong arm clasped around her, and his brave, earnest eyes looking into those which were now raised to meet his loving gaze, he spoke eagerly and tenderly. "Estelle!—why should we part?—why say farewell at all?—come with me now, my darling. Yet—"

Here O'Neill paused irresolutely, the innate truth and honesty of his heart preventing him from taking advantage of Estelle's ignorance of the life she would have to lead, and the deep devoted love she had for him, and pressing a point, the issue of which was to gain for him that which his heart

most desired, but which for her might prove so great a sacrifice. Gently he withdrew his arm from around her and stood for some seconds, his arms folded, and his brow bent, as if buried in deep and anxious thought ; while Estelle stood watching him, her eyes filled with alternate hope, fear, and love.

"Listen, Estelle!" cried Morven, turning to her and eagerly clasping both her hands in his, "listen!—I am poor now, I have neither home, nor gold, nor lands ; but I hope it may soon be otherwise, and that I shall win back with honour the confiscated estates of my ancestors. It is for *you* then to choose whether you will share my uncertain life—a life surrounded by dangers and difficulties—my hopes for the future—poverty—hardships—privations, it may be, of which you have scarce ever dreamed in your bright, pure young life. Say, Estelle, my loved one!" he asked, earnestly, "will you stay here, and wed the one with whose hand you will have wealth, power, and station?—To many," he added, bitterly, "the most precious possessions in this world—or will you be the bride of the poor patriot, who has, long ere this, given all he had to bestow to the cause of his country ; but whose love for you is as true and unchanging as the stars above us?"

"Ah, Morven," replied Estelle, her brow clouded with anxious thought, her slight form trembling with emotion, "it is all so sudden, indeed."

"Estelle," continued Morven, "there is an old friend of my father's, who lives a few miles away from here, Father Antonelli he is called ; perhaps you may have heard of him, he is a kind-hearted, good man. If I tell him all, he will, I know, for my father's sake, as well as for my own, help me. Come with me then, my heart's darling—and Father Antonelli will marry us. Immediately after we will leave France by the first boat we can procure, to take us to my own loved Ireland."

So earnest was the conversation between Estelle and Morven, and so deeply had their attention been engaged with each other, that they had not observed the near proximity of Owen Maguire, who had been gradually approaching nearer and nearer, an unusual mixture of anxiety and curiosity in

his merry countenance. At last he could no longer restrain his great impatience, and crossing hastily to Estelle's side, he addressed her earnestly and excitedly.

"Oh! me lady," he exclaimed, "don't be kapin his honour here anny longer! I ax yer pardon for spakin' to yez now, but 'tis for love av him I done it. Oh! come away wid him at wanst, sure it's himself is the best and thurst gintleman in all the world, an' he'll niver let yer ladyship repint it. Say ye'll come, me lady," he continued, coaxingly, "say ye'll come—now before it's too late. There's warm hearts in the counthry we're goin' to, that'll give ye the wilcome for his honour's sake. There's many anxious hearts waitin' in ould Ireland, that'll break if *Ua Néill* doesn't come back to thim. Oh! yer ladyship, sure if ye knew all the good that's widin that brave, thrue heart av his—if ye raley love him, there's no sacrifice ye could make that would be too great for *his* sake."

Owen's sudden appearance, combined with his excited and emphatic mode of address, somewhat startled Estelle, and she instinctively drew nearer to Morven for protection.

"Morven," she asked, timidly, "who is dis man? He does seem excited. I do not know him. I have fear of him."

"That you need never have, Estelle," replied Morven, warmly; "he is my faithful follower, my truest friend. Through many a hard trial, through many perils, he has proved his devotion to me, a devotion, I much fear, it may never be in my power to repay."

"Sure, 'tis only Misther O'Neill's servant I am, me lady," interrupted Owen, hastily, "but I love him wid all me heart, an, troth, I'll stand by him through ivery throuble, sorrow, an misforthune; proud if I could give me life to sarve him. An' if I sane him thravellin to desthruccion. sure, I'd follow in the same road, an thry to turn him, aven though he went swift as a sthane into a bog lake. Sure, me lady," he asked, earnestly, "*your* love isn't poorer than *mine*, that ye'd be houldin back yet?"

Without waiting for Estelle's reply, but with one long, lingering look of earnest pathos into the perplexed, anxious face before him, he left her alone with Morven, in the hope

that his words, together with the eloquent pleading of his master, would have some effect on Estelle's final decision.

"Estelle," said Morven, gravely, "I have only remained silent so long, because I feel that I dare not press you, lest any influence of mine leads you to take a step you might afterwards bitterly regret ; but you know well, that all the words I could utter, all the eloquence I could use, would be powerless to express the love I have for you."

"Oh, Morven !" exclaimed Estelle, holding out her hands to him, "I will come ! I will come ! Take me away from dis wretched place, from de terrible fate dat does await me here. If I remain, I shall be forced into dis frightful marriage. Oh !" she added, shuddering, "it would be worse dan death, for, Morven, I should never cease to remember de love which might have been mine—my breaking heart would be wid *you* night and day, until de cold grave had all my sorrows ended. I will go wid *you*, my heart's best love—I will share de poverty—de peril—de misfortune, oh ! so cheerfully. I shall work for you—I shall do all dat is in my power to be a help to you, and feel more dan repaid by de wealth of happiness wid which your love shall fill my heart."

Indeed, Estelle felt repaid when, on glancing at Morven, she read the hope and the happiness in the rare radiant smile that illumined his face, and added such a tender light to his eyes.

"Is it really so, Estelle ?" asked Morven, with emotion. "Then you consent, my own true love ?"

"You will of dis never repent, my Morven?" asked Estelle, anxiously, "you are sure, *quite* sure, it is dat you have one great faith in me, your Estelle ?"

"I am perfectly sure, Estelle, my darling," replied Morven, tenderly clasping her hands in his, and looking down on her with a wealth of love in his earnest gaze. "When my spirits are drooping, and my heart is weary with care, your bright presence will cheer me ; when troubles and misfortunes come, as they must surely come to us all in this world, we will smile at them, and feel how light is every sorrow when those we love are near us."

Again, Owen Maguire, whose patience was, by this time,

well nigh exhausted, hastily approached Estelle and O'Neill. He appeared in great fear and excitement, and was pointing anxiously in the direction of the chateau.

"Oh, me lady! masther dear! Go—go at wanst—fly for yer lives. Sure, they're comin'—they've maybes missed her ladyship, an' they're comin' this way afther her. See—see their figures through the threes—woorse luck to thim—'tis the two gentlemen themselves. Oh! me lady, don't lose a moment if ye value Misther O'Neill's life and liberty."

"I am ready, Morven," cried Estelle, laying her hands on his shoulders, "oh! my love, my love! I have decided. Take me wid you—I could not part from you for ever. See!" she added, looking with fear in the direction of the chateau, "see what fate is coming, can anything be to me so bad—so hateful—as *it* should be. Yes, it is wid *you* I shall go, my Morven."

"Come, then! my only love! fairest of brides! welcome to the heart and home of the one to whom you will ever be the dearest being on earth," replied Morven.

"Oh! *come*, masther dear," exclaimed Owen, entreatingly.

"Ah!" cried Estelle, suddenly, "I had forgotten, my toilette—it is my dress, Morven; it is light, dey will see it."

"'Tis all right, me lady, only come away from here. I have the masther's big cloak beyant there wid the hoorse, sure it'll cover yez, enthirely," said Owen..

"That is well, Owen!" replied Morven. "Now we have decided, let us go quickly; but where is the horse?" he asked, anxiously, "and how are you to follow us to Father Antonelli's house, Owen, my boy?"

"Niver mind me, yer honour, 'tisin't long I'll be av followin' yersilf an' her ladyship, annyhow. I belave the hoorse will carry ye both aisy enough, 'tis fresh an' lively. This way! this way, Misther Morven!" he cried, hurriedly. "Ochone! it's mesilf that wishes we were safe out av this counthry, an' on Irish soil wanst moor."

Very impatiently Owen watched Morven, as he drew Estelle's veil over her face and around her shoulders, and then led her down the steps leading to the gardens below.

They soon reached the park, and were hidden by the trees from the view of any one in the chateau, or on the terraces.

For the present, we will leave them to pursue their way to the residence of Father Antonelli.

Owen had seen them mounted, and started on their strange, romantic journey. Estelle, riding behind Morven, with his large cloak wrapped carefully around her, seemed to enjoy the novelty of the situation, now that she was fairly out of the grounds of the chateau.

Oh ! love, love ! How thou canst overcome every difficulty, make the darkest day seem bright, the roughest path smooth and fair, casting a glorious halo over all things, however poor, however mean, or commonplace, that come within thy chastening power, and the radiance of thy brilliant light.

Unfortunately, Owen could not quite see the adventures of that night in the same pleasing light in which they were now viewed by Morven and Estelle, and he gravely shook his head, as the distant and receding sound of their happy voices and laughter fell upon his ear ; *they* seemed to have forgotten all their troubles ; but Owen knew that they were not yet out of danger, and he was still anxious, as he stood, a solitary watcher, in the dark valley, gazing wistfully after them as they disappeared from his sight, and were lost in the far distance.

“ Oh ! may the good luck be about thim this night, an’ iver,” murmured Owen, solemnly, “ and Heaven kape thim from all harm ! ”

END OF PROLOGUE.

CHAPTER I.—IRELAND.

“ Erin ! the tear and the smile in thine eyes
Blend like the rainbow that hangs in thy skies !
Shining through sorrows stream,
Saddening through pleasures beam,
Thy suns, with doubtful gleam,
Weep while they rise ! ”

MOORE.

For centuries past, the weird phantoms of sorrow, trouble, and despair had haunted Ireland ; but in the year 1780, the famous Grattan made his demand for Irish independence ; and, in 1782, an important meeting was held in Dublin, at which the members made a point of claiming civil rights and other privileges, to which they considered—and with justice—that they were entitled. At the same time, they passed a resolution, expressing their great satisfaction that the penal laws had been relaxed.

This action on their part was most favourably approved of by the Government, and had, at that time, a good effect ; and between the years 1782 and 1794 there had appeared some slight hope that better days might yet dawn for Erin.

This hope was, however, soon dispelled, and those who had lulled themselves into a feeling of false security with the thought that at last peace and happiness might reign in their poor, distressed country, found that their hopes were very far from being realized ; for, like a fire that is hidden, but not quenched, the ashes were still smouldering and burning, slowly, but surely ; and there were only too many hands ready and anxious to re-kindle the fierce flames

of ill-feeling and discontent that had never quite died out of the hearts of the Irish people.

The seeds of rebellion that had been so ruthlessly sown broadcast, and scattered with unsparing hand o'er a soil which was, at that time, only too fertile and too well prepared to receive them, had taken root and were spreading and flourishing with alarming rapidity throughout the whole length and breadth of Ireland.

The short period of comparative peace and calm had only been the lull before the storm that was once more to break over one of the fairest of countries, and render it a scene of bloodshed and mourning, in which innocent and guilty, friends and foes, alike suffered.

In 1791 a number of enthusiastic Irish Roman Catholics and Protestants banded themselves together, forming the society known as *The United Irishmen*, all alike working with a will, and with the greatest harmony and friendship for the advantage and for the future prosperity of the country they loved so well. Among the leaders on the Roman Catholic side were Keogh, Byrne, Sweetman, and McCormic ; and among the Protestants were Wolfe Tone, Neilson, Napper Tandy, and Butler.

It might have been supposed that a society including leaders and members of such intellect, undaunted courage, and patriotism, must surely prosper, but it was not to be so, for, owing to some of the resolutions passed, and the opinions held by certain members of this society, the Government, in 1794, attempted, somewhat rashly, to put down the movement, taking no pains first to seek out and to remove, as far as possible, the causes of discontent. The result of this interference on the part of the Government proved to be disastrous in its consequences. *The United Irishmen* at once formed themselves into a *Secret Society* and were joined by several men of note, who had been sent over to Ireland, by the French Republic, on a secret embassy ; and this becoming known to the English Government, several of the Irish leaders, who had attempted to befriend and to shelter them, were compelled to leave the country to save their lives and their liberty.

Some of these exiles, who had been important members of

the *Secret Society* landed in France, there intending to gain help for and adherents to their cause, others proceeded to the United States, in the hope of being able to form a great National Alliance for the Society of *The United Irishmen*. This, then, was the condition of Ireland at the time when our story opens, in the year 1798, when the names of Holt and Emmet became so celebrated in Irish history.

There were, and unfortunately for Ireland, always have been, two distinct orders of Patriots.

The one—whose whole heart and soul is in his country—who would willingly and unselfishly give up all—make any sacrifice for her—content to live or die, for the “Great Cause;” while the other—a man who is half an alien—a stranger; who, working upon the noble sentiments and aspirations—the love of country—of the genuine patriot, and upon the feelings of a warm-hearted, impressionable, and impulsive people, is in reality striving for naught save his own aggrandizement and self-interest, and to gain this purpose, he cares not how much ruin and desolation he may bring upon the country for which he feels but little interest, much less such love and devotion as that which must exist in the heart of every real, true Patriot.

CHAPTER II.

“ I will go to beautiful Wicklow,
The hunted outlaw's rest,
Which the tread of rebel and rapparee
In many a struggle prest.”

J. BRENNAN.

A few weeks after the events recorded in the last chapter of the Prologue, when we left Morven O'Neill, and Estelle de Montmorenci, in France, to proceed on their way to the abode of the Italian priest, Father Antonelli, a very different scene was being enacted in Ireland. The night was cold, for the season, and following as it had, such a bright Spring day ; but it was not dark. Myriads of stars illumined the sky above, and though they were now and again hidden from view by passing clouds, they seemed only to shine forth once more with greater splendour on the sombre old Barracks, at Glencree, in the County of Wicklow, and on the form of Private Pike, a soldier of the Marines, who, being on duty as sentry, was marching to and fro in front of the barrack gate. Within the gate was the guard-room, from whence were proceeding, from time to time, sounds of mirth and merriment ; one voice, foremost among the others, being that of the little drummer, Shilrick O'Toole, a boy of about fourteen years of age, whose bright, handsome face, Irish humour, and winning roguish ways, combined with a brave, undaunted heart, that would have done honour to a veteran son of Mars, and a sweet, generous disposition, had long since made him—alike with officers and men—the pet, and the favourite of the corps. On this occasion, Shilrick was the centre of an admiring, and highly interested group.

Seated on the end of the long table, in the middle of

the room, with a pretty, knowing-looking Skye terrier beside him, intently watching his every movement, ears, tail, and nose all quivering with intense excitement as Shilrick uttered each word of command, and put him through various military evolutions, the dog seeming to enjoy the lesson as thoroughly as his teacher, wagging his tail vigorously and occasionally barking with delight at the applause of the select and appreciative audience assembled in the guard-room, and of the enticing pieces of biscuit that were laid on his black nose, for his eager consumption when the course of drill should be satisfactorily accomplished. The boy and the dog, with their martial surroundings, made a pretty picture, and so thought Lieutenant Digby, the young Marine officer on guard, who having come outside for a few minutes to enjoy the fresh air, chanced to glance in at the guard-room door and to see what was going on. Shilrick was in a graceful attitude, his arm upraised, as if to enforce some command upon his little playfellow; his three-cornered hat had fallen from his head, and lay beside his drum, on the ground at his feet. His fair hair was powdered, and arranged according to the military regulations of the time. The drummer's uniform, which has been, almost at any period, both becoming and picturesque, was especially so at that date; and the scarlet coat with its white lapels, and the handsome embroidery with which it was covered, the cord across the left shoulder, from which the bugle was suspended, the belt and drummer's sword, all suited Shilrick O'Toole to perfection, and could not have been worn with a better grace. Though so young, he had already seen some active service on sea and land.

The various faces, and expressions on the countenances of the men assembled around Shilrick, presented a strange contrast. Some few, who had seen good service, being well-bronzed by exposure to the suns of many a foreign clime, and having a hardy weather-beaten appearance, which proved that they had on more than one occasion, braved the battle and the breeze. The others in the group were fresh-looking young lads, who were only then commencing their military career, but were always willing, eager listeners to the wonderful tales of their older and more experienced comrades, and

were anxiously waiting, and wondering when the time would come when they too might distinguish themselves, and go forth to meet Death or Glory, for their King and their Country.

The Skye terrier, now seated beside Shilrick on the guard-room table, and certainly not the least important subject in the group, was called Nap, this name being an abbreviation of "Napper Tandy," and he belonged to Miss Eveleen Corrie, the Colonel's daughter. Having long been accustomed to barrack life, Nap had become quite a well-known military character, and was more or less acquainted with most of the men who had been sent with the battalion to Ireland ; but Shilrick was a much-favoured friend, and instinct seemed to have told Nap that he was to be on guard that night, for he had left home surreptitiously and cautiously, and with a considerable amount of cunning—for dogs can think and plan as well as human beings—proceeded by a circuitous route to the guard-room, when, after much sniffing and scratching at the door, and a final short, imperious bark, he was joyfully admitted by his friend Shilrick, and warmly welcomed by the other Marine soldiers on guard. On hearing the sounds of merry voices and frequent laughter that came from the guard-room, Pike, the lonely sentry, began to feel much aggrieved, being, so to speak, left out in the cold.

"Hear to them, now !" he murmured, as he paused near the gate. "They be having a fine time of it in there. They've got that there boy, Shilrick O'Toole, with them to-night—he's as good as the play. It's a getting mortal cold out here. Ah !" he exclaimed suddenly, as on turning to continue his march up and down, he saw Major Norton approaching, followed by Sergeant Marks and a file of men of his own corps. "Here be the visitin' officer coming his rounds, at last."

As the party arrived at the barrack gate, Pike, porting arms, gave the usual challenge—

"Who comes there ?"

"Rounds !" replied Sergeant Marks.

"What rounds ?"

"Grand rounds !"

"Stand, grand rounds ! Guard, turn out !"

Scarcely had the last words crossed Pike's lips, before the guard of twelve men, coming hastily out of the guard-room, had ranged themselves in a line, two deep, in front of the door, followed by Lieutenant Digby, Shilrick O'Toole, Sergeant Smith and Corporal Hickson, who placed themselves in position along the line; Nap following close on the heels of Shilrick and solemnly taking post beside him, a manœuvre which he had been carefully taught on previous occasions, and never forgot, though this time his mind was painfully divided between a sense of duty and a wish to recognize Major Norton, who was also an acquaintance of some standing. Duty prevailed, however, and he contented himself with a vigorous wag of his tail, as he finally took up his position at the end of the line.

Corporal Hickson then taking the left file of the guard, opened the barrack gate and approached Major Norton.

"Halt!" he cried to his men, "Port arms!" then, turning to Major Norton, he repeated the challenge, "Who comes there?"

"Rounds!" again replied the Major.

"What rounds?"

"Grand rounds!"

"Stand, grand rounds, advance one, and give the countersign!"

Sergeant Marks here came forward, and in a low voice gave the countersign to Corporal Hickson, the two men of the file charging bayonets as he advanced.

Hickson then returned (leaving his two men still guarding the gate, with charged bayonets) to repeat the countersign to Lieutenant Digby, who, having received it in the usual manner, turned to give the words of command, "Advance, grand rounds! All's well!"

Corporal Hickson once more returning to his men gave his orders, "Shoulder arms! face inwards, step back three paces, quick march!" when the rounds then passed between them, and entered the barrack gate.

"Left shoulders forward!" again cried Corporal Hickson to his men, "Quick march!"

The two men once more took up their position with the rest of the guard, and Corporal Hickson fell in behind, as before.

The two officers, Major Norton and Lieutenant Digby, advanced and saluted each other, conversing together in low tones for some moments ; Sergeant Marks being at a little distance with his two men, who were standing "attention." Major Norton then turned and, going across the barrack square, passed out of sight.

"Left shoulders forward! Quick march!" called Sergeant Marks to his two men, who after obeying these commands followed Major Norton into barracks.

Lieutenant Digby then turning to the guard, gave the orders, "To the right—face—lodge arms!" After which manœuvres the men broke ranks and all once more re-entered the guard-room, Nap following in faithful attendance on Shilrick. Pike, as sentry, continued to pace up and down again as before, and all was once more quiet.

Only a few moments elapsed, however, before the silence was again broken. Lieutenant Digby, coming out of the guard-room, and sauntering leisurely through the barrack-gate, on to the road, encountered his great friend and brother officer, Captain Ellis, who was then on his way to his quarters.

"Is that you, Ellis?" cried Digby. "I thought you were in barracks long before this time!"

"And you were right, Digby," replied Ellis. "But I was tempted by the beauty of the evening, and went out again by the small gate; I have had a very pleasant walk round."

"Ah! *seeking information*, as usual, I suppose, Ellis?" asked Digby, who, with all his good nature, and friendship, for the other, could scarcely keep out of his words a slight tone of sarcasm.

"Well, not that exactly, to-night, Digby, I simply wearied of the choice between the mess-room and my barrack-room, (which is not so very agreeable, you know), so I took a star-light walk, as a means of settling the difference," answered Ellis, smiling.

"I wish I had been able to accompany you," said Digby.

"I should have been glad of your company. I had but a solitary walk, after all, and I have much to say to you, Digby.

I was just thinking how fortunate it is that you and I have been sent together on this expedition to Ireland, for, as you may possibly have noticed, it generally happens that, when two officers are particular friends, they are sure, by some strange fate, to be sent off to diametrically opposite stations of the globe, and, in too many instances, do not meet again for long years. You and I have ever been firm friends," added Ellis, earnestly; "first, as children and playmates, and afterwards, in the old corps, when your choice, with the strange perversity that so often attends *only* sons, led you to decide on the Army as your profession."

"Indeed, Ellis," replied Digby. "I am glad that we are together now. I do not know what I should have done here without you and Annesley. It is fortunate that he also is with the battalion; but do you know I have been thinking how curious it is that nearly all the Irish officers in the corps appear to have been sent on this expedition. The Colonel, himself, said a few days ago, that it was quite an 'Irish Brigade.' Even young Shilrick O'Toole, the drummer, has been sent with us."

"That was Annesley's doing," replied Ellis. "Shilrick O'Toole belongs to his company, and the little fellow is a great favourite of his. I believe he even requested that he might be sent here with us. Shilrick has relations and friends in this neighbourhood; he is a younger son of Annesley's foster-mother, and the brave boy saved his life on one occasion."

"Do you think he is to be trusted," asked Digby, thoughtfully. "I mean with regard to his loyalty."

"I believe the lad is true as steel," answered Ellis, "and I know that his brother, Kerry O'Toole, that handsome gipsy-looking fellow, Annesley's foster-brother, is one of His Majesty's most faithful subjects."

"I had nearly forgotten, Ellis, I wish to ask you about the Cavalry officers who are stationed near here; you saw some of them to-day, I think. What sort of fellows are they?"

"Two or three of those I met seem pleasant enough, and I like Major Ricardo *very much*, but there is a young Lieutenant, called Rochfort, whose conceit and cool impertinence are perfectly insufferable," replied Ellis.

"Ah!" said Digby, smiling, "I have heard of *him*, I believe that he and Annesley have already had a desperate dispute."

"What was the cause?" asked Ellis.

"Oh, about Shilrick, I believe," answered Digby. "Rochfort said that he had seen 'that young rascal of a drummer,' as he called him, constantly knocking about with suspicious looking characters, and that our Colonel ought to look better after the men under his command."

"And I can well imagine Annesley's reply," said Ellis, laughing, "if there was one man in our corps more capable than another of answering Rochfort, and putting down his conceit, that man was certainly Annesley."

"But, Ellis," said Digby, "do you think that it was, after all, wise to send so many Irish officers with this battalion? Colonel Corrie and Annesley are both natives of Wicklow, and they must naturally feel kindly disposed towards their own countrymen. Then the Rebels are so mixed up with the Royalists that we can scarcely tell who is really on our side. Would not strangers have been better able to do their duty unreservedly, having no personal interest in any of the people?"

So engrossed had Ellis and Digby been with their conversation, that they had not observed the approach of Captain Armoric Annesley; and as he stood before his two startled comrades, his dark, stern, handsome face was flushed with anger, the large, dark, deep blue eyes, that seemed more intensely brilliant in contrast to the powdered hair, were now positively ablaze with honest indignation, and he appeared to the two young officers the very impersonation of outraged dignity.

At once Captain Ellis felt how unfortunate had been the words of his young and impulsive companion, knowing well, as he did, that Annesley was a man who had always done his duty in whatever circumstances he had been placed, that to him indeed duty had ever been a watchword, and that he would never be guilty of a mean, cowardly, or dishonourable action, or aught that would forfeit for him the title of the brave, true, loyal gentleman and soldier that he had ever proved himself to be, from the first day that he had entered

the corps of Marines. He was a favourite with all his brother officers, and there was not a man in the corps who did not like and respect Captain Annesley. That Annesley felt deeply hurt at the words he had just overheard, both his comrades could see, but Digby felt too much ashamed, and Ellis too distressed, to speak for some moments.

"Many thanks for your candid opinion, Digby, so frankly expressed," said Annesley, haughtily, at last breaking the awkward silence. "Excuse me for accidentally over-hearing your confidential conversation."

"I am sorry if my words offended you, Annesley," replied Digby, frankly, "but what I have just been saying to Ellis, I should as freely have said to yourself."

"Indeed!" said Annesley, indignantly. "You do not seem to understand then, that you could scarcely offer a greater insult to a soldier, than to suppose that he would allow his own personal interests and feelings to stand in the way of his loyalty, or his duty?"

"Oh, Digby!" said Ellis, in a low voice, "you always manage, in some way or other, to say the most awkward things."

Then turning to Annesley, he spoke, anxiously :

"Never mind him, Annesley, he did not mean to offend you, and we have all three been devoted comrades too long to let such trifles part us."

"Ellis is right, Annesley," said Digby, earnestly, "and I cannot express how grieved I am that any careless words of mine should have hurt the feelings of my friend, and one of the bravest officers in the service."

"Who could hold out against an apology so gracefully made?" replied Annesley, smiling, and holding out his hand to Digby, who grasped it warmly in his.

"And now, Annesley," said Ellis, "you have just seen the Colonel, what news have you to report to us?"

"There are orders for us to hold ourselves in readiness to be called out at any moment, as a rising is expected in the neighbourhood, immediately."

"Ah! a false alarm no doubt, like the last," replied the incredulous Digby. "Well, I must confess, with all due deference to the authorities, that I scarcely see the use of our

being sent here at all, and in such haste, too ; the whole neighbourhood seems peaceable enough, and we were well received by the people. The barracks are wretched, but, however, it is a lovely country, and most of the families, round about, are kindly and hospitable, and so I have no doubt that our campaign in Ireland will be pleasant enough, though I had great hope that we might have seen some active service."

"The people have been peaceable enough as yet," said Ellis.

"But, how long they may remain so is another thing," observed Annesley, thoughtfully.

"We have had nothing to excite us since we arrived," said Digby, discontentedly. "Nothing to do—no fighting, nor anything of that sort, you know."

"Positively nothing !" replied Ellis, "with the exception of the blowing-up of that small Fort, and even *that* would not have happened, had attention been paid to the warning of young Colbrook ; he reported to the authorities in London a conversation he had overheard among the peasantry at Bray, about the insufficient manner in which the Fort was guarded, and that the party of Rebels, known as the 'Bold Boys of Wicklow,' would, in all probability, make a raid upon it some fine night. However, as you may have heard, the authorities wrote in great haste, ordering him not to meddle with affairs '*unconnected with his own particular duties.*' Not one word of thanks did he receive."

"No," said Digby, "that is the way we are always served ; and Colbrook said the whole of Ireland might be blown up before *he* gave any information again, or took the trouble to interfere in any matter *unconnected with his own particular duties.*"

"And quite right of Colbrook to say so," replied Annesley, smiling. "I think the authorities always like to imagine that they have found out everything for themselves, and possibly they did not object to the blowing-up of the Fort in question, as it will save them the expense and responsibility of keeping it up."

During the foregoing conversation, Sergeant Marks, unseen by the three officers, had hurriedly entered the guard-room,

and, after a few moments, reappeared, followed by Shilrick O'Toole, carrying his drum. They seemed to be in great haste, and both were evidently much excited. After pausing a moment, in the centre of the barrack square, to give Shilrick a few final orders, Sergeant Marks proceeded on his way, and, immediately afterwards, Annesley, Ellis, and Digby were startled by the sound of Shilrick beating the "alarm" on his drum, the deep roll of which was heard for some distance over the surrounding neighbourhood.

"Ah! it has come sooner than I expected, then!" exclaimed Annesley. "There is the alarm drum! How quickly the men are assembling," he added, as he glanced in at the gate and saw the soldiers hurriedly crossing the barrack square, from all quarters. "Come, Ellis, we must go."

"The Rebels have really risen at last then!" said Digby, excitedly.

"And so there *may* perhaps be some chance of a little *active service* for you after all, Digby," remarked Ellis, laughing, as all three disappeared through the gate, Digby once more entering the guard-room, while Annesley and Ellis proceeded to the centre of the square, where officers and men were assembling with wonderful rapidity.

Once more, the roll of the drum is heard, and then Shilrick returns to the barrack gate, where he stops to speak to Pike, Nap being still in faithful attendance, and having accompanied each roll of the drum with a loud and prolonged howl—at last, however, he seemed to think that his visit to Shilrick had been of sufficiently long duration, so with a final wag of the tail, and after a caressing pat from his young friend, he turned into barracks, and with the speed of a hare, darted across the square, and soon arrived at the Colonel's quarters, where his mistress, Eveleen Corrie, had been for some time anxiously awaiting his appearance, though she was now well accustomed to Nap's eccentric manœuvres, and his complimentary visits to those among the officers and men whom he honoured with his especial friendship.

"What's up now, Shilrick O'Toole?" asked Pike, inquisitively, as the drummer came up to him.

"We're ordhered out afther the Rebels, they're said to be about somewheres," replied Shilrick.

"Who give the information?" inquired Pike.

"Sure 'twas that same man they call Stalker, the English pathrol, that was sint here a shoort time ago," answered Shilrick. "Maybes," he added, contemptuously, "it's thim that sint him thought he was cliver, but the sorra wan av *us* has been able to find it out yet, at all, at all."

"Oh!" cried Pike, disdainfully, "a bright one *he* is, he's give information three or four times now, and he's 'ad all on us out for nothink, pretty frequent lately; like enough it be only a false alarm agin."

"An' so he has—woorse luck to him," replied Shilrick, "but niver mind, Pike, me bhoy, sure it's all in the way av duty enthirely, an' faith we'll do ours, an' obey ordhers annyhow, like good souldiers."

"Dooty indeed!" said Pike, contemptuously, "to be sent a-skirmishing hover the country for no use whatsomever."

After again beating a long roll on his drum, in front of the barrack gate, Shilrick returned to the guard-room, whence a few minutes after a sweet, clear boy's voice was heard singing the old military song :

"When I was an infant, gossips would say,
I'd when older, be a soldier,
Rattles and toys, I'd throw them away
Unless a gun or a sabre.
When a youngster up I grew,
Saw one day a grand review,
Colours flying, set me dying,
To embark in a life so new.
Roll drums merrily, march away,
Soldier's glory lives in story
His laurels are green when his locks are grey,
Then hey! for the life of a soldier.

"Listed, to battle I march'd along,
Courting danger, fear a stranger,
The cannon beat time to the trumpet's song
And made my heart a hero's,
'Charge!' the gallant leaders cry,
On, like lions, then we fly,
Blood and thunder, foes knock under,
Then huzza for a victory,

Roll drums merrily, march away,
Soldier's glory lives in story,
His laurels are green, when his locks are grey,
Then hey ! for the life of a soldier."

S. G. ARNOLD.

Older and deeper voices join Shilrick lustily in the chorus at the end of each verse. At the conclusion of the song all is quiet for awhile. Pike, having paused to listen to the singing, once more continues his march to and fro, murmuring as he goes :

"They *does* have a merry time of it in there, when that there boy is the drummer on guard."

CHAPTER III.

" By honour bound in woe and weal,
Whate'er she bids he dares to do ;
Try him with bribes—they won't prevail ;
Prove him in fire—you'll find him true,
He seeks not safety, let his post
Be where it ought—in danger's van ;
And if the field of fame be lost,
It won't be by an Irishman."

JAMES ORR.

Mrs. Kinahan, the landlady of the " Shamrock," a lonely roadside inn, situated mid-way between Glencree and the Wicklow Mountains, was considered a most respectable member of society. She was in the habit of calling herself " a lone widow." That she was a widow was certainly true enough, and no one could gainsay *that* fact, but " lone " she could scarcely be called, for she had many friends, and her house was always well filled with customers and patrons. In her early youth Mrs. Kinahan had been in service with the O'Neill's, who were then apparently flourishing and prosperous landowners in Wicklow and Ulster ; afterwards she was Morven O'Neill's nurse, when her faithful devotion to, and warm affection for her little charge, were unbounded and beyond all praise.

While in this capacity, she met with a dashing young " whipper-in," called Mike Kinahan, who being much attracted by her pretty face and unblemished character, persuaded her to cast in her lot with his. Mike Kinahan being by no means devoid of personal attractions, and having the decided gift of the blarney, soon contrived to win the affections of the warm-hearted Mary McCarthy, and she willingly accepted his offer, only stipulating that she was

not to leave "the young Masther Morven," until he no longer required her services.

When that time came, the inn called the "Shamrock" chanced to be unoccupied, and Morven O'Neill's father, though in much poorer circumstances than he had been some years before, was not unmindful of the past services of Mary McCarthy, and of Mike Kinahan, who had been with him from boyhood, and knowing that Mike had always had a certain hankering for the post of landlord of an inn, he gave them a sufficient sum of money to enable them to take the "Shamrock," and to start fairly in life.

Little thought Shane O'Neill how this act of kindness would "like bread cast upon the waters," be returned to him and to his, and that, long years after, when he and his wife were sleeping their last long sleep, and were at rest for ever from all care and strife, their only and much loved son, Morven, the pride of their hearts, would be wandering a lonely, sorrowful exile, while his home and lands were in the hands of strangers; and that he would, often, in the days of danger and trouble, find a safe shelter in the "Shamrock," and owe his life and his liberty, on more than one occasion, to the faithful devotion of the Kinahans.

When this story opens, Mike Kinahan had been dead for some years. One of his few faults had been, his fondness for "the laste dhrop in the world," and unfortunately there were only too many opportunities for the exercise of this taste, in his position as landlord, and the over frequent indulgence of the same, together with a severe cold, brought on a serious illness, to which he succumbed, leaving Mrs. Kinahan the sole mistress of the inn, and the proud possessor of a very pretty little daughter. Mrs. Kinahan contrived to keep up the prestige of the inn, and that too at a most trying time.

How she managed to keep on good terms with both the Military and the Rebels, with irate landlords, and discontented tenants, each party leaving her house with a firm conviction that it was *their* side the widow favoured, no one could tell. Certain it was that she seemed to treat all with strict impartiality. Sometimes it was thought by outsiders, who could see a little of the by-play, that Mrs. Kinahan must

surely, in the course of time, fall between the proverbial "two stools," but that lady always contrived cleverly to retain her equilibrium, and to thrive as before.

It must here be owned, however, that, in her heart, she had always favoured the Rebels, and her attachment to their cause was not lessened by the fact that Morven O'Neill had joined them.

Of late, Mrs. Kinahan had been somewhat harassed with anxieties unconnected with her duties as hostess of the "Shamrock." Her daughter, Anastasia, was the cause of much concern to her mother, who had in view a suitable sweetheart for Anty—as she was always called—in the person of Sheymus Malloy, a fine-looking, prosperous young farmer, a tenant on the estate of Lord Powerscourt. Anty however, had long ago made *her* selection, and that selection was unfortunately likely to clash with her mother's, for her choice had fallen upon Owen Maguire, Morven O'Neill's faithful attendant; and as Owen's steadfast heart had been irrevocably bestowed upon Anty, it boded ill for the success of Mrs. Kinahan's plans and careful arrangements.

Sheymus Malloy was always kind and attentive to Anty; he admired and liked the pretty girl, but he was most certainly not in love with her, nor had he at any time the slightest idea of the honour that Mrs. Kinahan was so anxious to bestow upon him. Anty and Sheymus were great friends, and this friendship Mrs. Kinahan had unfortunately mistaken for love.

On the afternoon of the day following that on which the alarm drum had been heard at Glencree Barracks, and the Marines were called out to quell an expected rising of the Rebels, all seemed to be once more tranquil and quiet in the neighbourhood.

No Rebels had been seen, and the alarm had evidently been, as Shilrick O'Toole had suspected, a false one.

That evening, at the hour of sunset, the solitary figure of Anty Kinahan might have been seen, as she slowly wended her way along a lonely road leading to Glencree.

Anastasia, or, as she was more frequently called, Anty Kinahan, possessed a pretty, bright face, dark hair, that fell in short curls about her forehead, and a pair of very brilliant,

dark-brown eyes. A dainty little figure completed and added to her attractions.

On this particular evening, however, her face was clouded with an expression of deep and anxious thought, and every few minutes as she proceeded on her way she turned to look around her cautiously, starting, and listening intently to the slightest sound.

The scenery through which she passed was grandly beautiful and picturesque, the somewhat sombre tints in the landscape being relieved by the soft rays of light that fell from the pale golden sunset.

Anty's attire, the short red skirt, and blue cloak, with its hood drawn over her dark, curly head, also formed a bright feature in the landscape. Early that morning Anty had, by some means, discovered that Owen Maguire was to be sent along the road towards Glencree Barracks, and that he was to wait about in the neighbourhood until he should chance to see Shilrick O'Toole, or any of the Marines, who would tell the drummer to come out to him. The girl immediately had in her mind all the dangers that might befall her lover, if the military authorities were to find out who he was, and by whom he was sent, or, on the other hand, if he should be seen by any of the "Bold Boys" speaking, or in friendly intercourse, with one of the soldiers stationed at Glencree. She accordingly persuaded him to give her the letter with which he had been entrusted, promising herself to deliver it into Shilrick's own hands. It was some time before Anty could prevail upon Owen to allow her to be messenger instead of himself, but at last he yielded to her earnest pleading, and her evident fears for his safety, as she assured him that for *her* there was no danger, but for *him* it was different, as the consequences might be serious, and that it would break her heart if any evil were to befall him.

Poor Mrs. Kinahan!—her hair, not to speak of her frilled cap, would most surely have stood on end, could she have seen Anty at that late hour on the road to Glencree Barracks, and had she for one moment guessed the girl's errand, and on whose account it had been undertaken.

Anty was, generally speaking, stout-hearted, and a stranger to fear, but now as she felt that the shadows of evening

would soon be gathering around her, and knew how far she was from home, or from any habitation, a feeling of intense loneliness seemed to creep over her, causing her to shiver as if with cold.

"Sure, 'tis stupid I am enthirely!" she exclaimed, impatiently, "to be frightened bekase I chance to be out late. Och! it isn't mesilf that'll be fearin' annythin'," she added, determinedly, as she pulled the hood of her cloak more closely around her head. "Sure, it's for *him* I'm doin' it, an' I'll not be frightened out av kapin' me promise annyhow. Ah!" she added, joyfully, as she once more turned to proceed on her way, "there's a souldier comin' now, an' oh good luck to him! I belave 'tis the boy, Shilrick O'Toole, himsilf."

Anty Kinahan was right in her surmise, for it was Shilrick the Drummer, who was now approaching her. "Sure," said Anty to herself, as she turned the letter about in her hands, "I wish that I hadn't to do this. I wish I hadn't to ax Shilrick to give this letther to Miss Eveleen Corrie. It sames wrong av the Bhoys to dhraw him into their plots an' plans. It'll maybes get him into throuble, but there's no wan ilse to thake the letther, an' Owen Maguire tould me that Miss Corrie must have it at wanst, and I wasn't to be sane inside the barracks, as I might be axed why I was there. There's none av the other Bhoys daur show thimsilves, an' Owen might have been in danger if he'd been sane spakin' to anny av the souldiers or wandherin' near the barracks, so there's no wan so able as mesilf, an' sure what is it I wouldn't do to plase him, an' save the bhoy from anny harm! I wondher what the letther's about," she said, thoughtfully, as she again turned it around in her hands.

"The top av the avenin' to ye, Anty Kinahan," said Shilrick, heartily, as he came up to Anty.

"Sure, it's glad I am to mate ye, Shilrick, 'tis a bit av a message I've got for yersilf. Here's a letther for Miss Corrie that was given to me. The wan that sint it said ye could be thrusted to give it to hersilf *at wanst*," said Anty. "But," she continued, mysteriously, "ye're niver to lave hould av it ontill ye put it safely into her own hands, an' no wan must see ye do this, or know that

ye have given her a letther at all, at all, except maybes it's Misthress Corrie, it doesn't matther for her knowin', but it would niver do for the Colonel, or Captain Annesley to hear about it. Can I trust ye, Shilrick," she asked, anxiously.

"Sure now, Anty! what's the use av axin me that, afther ye've tould me all about it enthirely," said Shilrick, laughing mischievously. "Where's the letther from, an' who sint it?" he asked.

"I wasn't to tell ye that, nor to spake about it, so plase ax me no more questions," said Anty.

"There's no harm in it, nor treason—nor annythin' agin the sarvice?" asked Shilrick.

"No, no," hastily replied Anty, "sure I can answer ye *that* safe enough."

"Nor nothin' that's to harm Captain Annesley nor Miss Corrie?" inquired Shilrick, still hesitating.

"No," again replied Anty, impatiently, "haven't I just tould ye 'tis all right enthirely."

"It's not from anny young gintleman that's afther Miss Corrie, is it?" Shilrick inquired. "Sure, if it is," he added, determinedly, "it's yerself that can tell him he's too late enthirely, for there's another before him, an sorra chance would the finest gintleman in all ould Ireland have agin our handsome young Captain, faith it's himself that would thake the braaze out av anny av their sails."

"It's not that, nayther, Shilrick," replied Anty, "an' sure I've said there's nothin' to harm annywan in the letther."

"Then give it to me, Anty. I'll thake it for ye," said Shilrick.

"An' ye'll remember what I've said about lettin' no wan see ye give it, onless maybes Misthress Corrie?" asked Anty, anxiously.

"I'll remimber," answered Shilrick, as Anty gave him the letter, which he carefully concealed in the breast of his coat.

"An' I thank ye, Shilrick, for thakin' the letther," said Anty; "an' now I'll be goin'," she added, "for 'tis gettin' late an' dhark."

"Oh ! Anty Kinahan," cried Shilrick, smiling, "sure it's yersilf has the gift av persuasion, troth yer bright eyes would make thraitors av the best av us."

"An' bein' in furrin parts hasn't made ye forgit the blarney, Shilrick, *ma bonchaleen*," replied Anty. "The top av the avenin' to ye !" she said, laughing, as she again drew her cloak more closely about her, and started on her return home.

"Good luck be wid ye, Anty, jewel !" called Shilrick after her.

Once, when at some little distance, Anty turned to look at the drummer, and murmured anxiously to herself, as she continued on her way, "Ochone ! I hope it'll not get the innocent bhoy into throuble."

Shilrick, after watching Anty, until she had almost disappeared, again took the letter from the breast of his coat, and examined it carefully.

"Now then, how is it I'll manage to give this to Miss Corrie, I wondher ?" said the boy, anxiously. "I'll have to wait until I see his honour the Colonel go out, and then I'll go to the dure an ax to spake wid her."

Very indignant would Captain Annesley, the Corries, and even Shilrick O'Toole have felt, had they been told, that in a few short weeks they, with many others who were then loyal to their King and country, would be irretrievably mixed up with the Rebels and their interests. Who could imagine that Anty Kinahan, with her frank, almost childish face, held in her hands the fate of so many, and that the contents of the innocent-looking missive she gave to Shilrick were but as the first threads of that web of mystery, secrecy, and rebellion that was to entangle in its meshes so many good hearts and true. While Shilrick was intently examining the letter given to him by Anty Kinahan, another figure was approaching ; that of a man of middle height ; but so slowly, so softly did he come creeping up to Shilrick that the latter was not aware of his near proximity, until he felt a face, close to his own, peering over his shoulder, striving, in the gathering darkness, to obtain a glimpse of the letter he still held in his hand. It was the work of an instant, however, for the boy once more to conceal it, and he

then turned coolly to Mr. Jeremiah Stalker, the English patrol, who had been sent from London, and whose duties were similar to those of a police-constable of the present day.

There was something about Jeremiah Stalker that appeared to inspire mistrust and dislike, both among his own countrymen and the Irish people. Certain it is that not one word had ever been heard in appreciation of his services.

Stalker's personal appearance was by no means prepossessing. In addition to a thick-set, clumsy figure, he had a round, bullet-shaped head, which was covered with the coarsest of red hair; his face was thickly spotted with freckles, which gave a muddy hue to his complexion; small eyes of the lightest possible shade, thick coarse lips, and a nose, with such a decided and uncompromising turn upwards, that it lent a most insolent expression to a face which appeared full of low cunning and self-conceit. He had a strange habit of walking, with neck bent forward, giving the effect of his head being considerably in advance of the rest of his person, and the idea that he was perpetually on the look out for evil doers who might be hiding in ambush somewhere near. He had also a certain trick when arguing or disputing a point, or airing his own opinions on any subject, of crossing his arms behind his back, screwing his lips tightly together, and holding his head on one side, in a manner that was truly exasperating; and it was in this attitude that he placed himself when about to address Shilrick O'Toole.

"What are you a-doing of 'ere now, you young chap?" he demanded roughly. "It's agin horders for hanyone to be a loiterin' about these 'ere roads and I shall 'ave—"

"Och! is it yersilf, Misther Stalker," exclaimed Shilrick, innocently. "Begorrah! I wondher ye're not ashamed to show yer face to anny av us for manny a long dhay. I wouldn't advise ye to let anny av our men see yez in a hurry, afther havin' ivery sowl av us out to the mountains, makin' the big *omadhawns* av us all for nothin'. But troth, *we* know ye now, an' maybes it won't be another rigiment ye'll have to get than the Marines, for sorra wan av *us* will listhen to yer *information* agin at all, at all."

"I did my dooty, in a-tellin' what I 'ad 'eard," replied

Stalker, pompously, "an' if so be as the Rebels 'ad moved from where they was said to be, an' didn't hintend no 'arm hafter all, it weren't no fault of mine as I can see. But this ain't what I was going for to speak to *you* about ; who was that a-talkin' to you just now ?"

"Talkin' to *me*, is it ?" asked Shilrick, in pretended surprise.

"Yes !" replied Stalker, " don't you be a tryin' for to deceive *me* with your roundabout Hirish ways. *I* see'd the young 'ooman as plain as I sees you now, and I know all as was going on atween you."

"Sure then, if ye saw iverythin' an ye know all that was goin' on, where's the use av axin' mesilf annythin' about it ?" asked Shilrick, innocently.

"I considers you a most suspicious character," continued Stalker, "an' it's not for no good that you're a-lurkin' about these 'ere roads."

"Hear that now !" said Shilrick, provokingly.

"I shall give hinformation as I see you a-talkin' to a young 'ooman in a werry suspicious manner," said Stalker, pompously.

"Just think av that now !" cried Shilrick, mischievously, "afther all the frindship that's come an gone betwane us."

"Mind ! I'm a-tellin' you now for your own good," continued Stalker. "You're a stoopid boy hif so be as you tries to go again the Gov'ment. You could make a fine thing of it if you chose, you that knows hevery pass an' turn of them mountains, an can talk the 'eathenish langige of the people too, if so be you'd only hact sensible, an' tell us where them rascals is as calls theirselves the "Bold Boys of Wicklow."

"Och ! sure now, Misther Stalker, an' how would *I* be knowin' where they are, at all, at all ?" asked Shilrick.

For a few moments Stalker remained silent, his small, bead-like eyes watching every change of expression on the bright, mobile face of the boy before him. Then, his head drooping more than usual to one side, he cleared his throat three times—a trick of his, preparatory to commencing a particularly important speech—and again addressed Shilrick in his most insinuating tones.

"Look you 'ere, boy ! I 'eard that the Rebels was in a

precious fright when it came to their knowledge that *you* was with the party of Marines as 'ad been sent 'ere, for they thought as you knew hall the places where they might conceal theirselves, an' so betray them. Now," he continued, still more insinuatingly, "I needn't say as 'ow you'd be well rewarded for any hinformation as you are able for to give. You know it ain't hevery day as gold is to be 'ad for the pickin' up, as you may say."

Had it not been so dark, or had Mr. Stalker been more observant of Shilrick at that moment, he would have seen how the angry colour dyed the boy's face, and how his eyes flashed with honest indignation.

"Misther Stalker," cried Shilrick at last, when his anger and astonishment at Stalker having attempted to bribe him had somewhat subsided, "I honour me King an' love me counthry, an' I'll always be thrue an' loyal to them. If I came across the "Bould Bhoys," in the way av me duty, and if it was fightin' agin me comrades they were, sure it's then I'd be lettin' them know how little *I* think av thim; but as to *informin'*, that's what I'll niver do—though maybes they'd do it where *you* come from. An' about the money ye were spakin' av," he added, disdainfully, "the reward I'd be gettin' for bethrayin' *me own counthrymen*, what d'ye think I'd do wid it, if 'twas offered to me?"

"I shouldn't like to hanswer for hanythin' as *you* might do," replied Stalker, shaking his head dubiously.

"Sure, I'd thake it to the narest fire," said Shilrick, with deep emotion. "I'd throw it in an' thin I'd sthand by, an' wid me own two eyes watch it meltin', meltin' away, an niver lave until it was a hape av black smouldherin' ashes, so that no honest hands should iver again touch the gould that was offered to buy the life av a fellow craythure."

Cold-hearted and callous as the man Stalker had always been, and with all the self-conceit that made him ever think the best of himself, and the worst of others—with all his desire and endeavours to find out the faults, errors, and crimes of human kind in general, and of those around him in particular, he was for some moments struck dumb with amazement, and admiration, at the beauty and nobleness of Shilrick's character, which was now revealed to him by the

boy's own impetuous words, and the deep feeling with which those words were uttered.

"That's a noble little fellow," murmured Stalker to himself, "an' he deserves for to be a Henglishman, more's the pity he ain't one." Then, turning again to Shilrick, he continued, "Well ! there's *one* thing p'raps as you won't hobjeck for to tell me, an' that's where I can find a hofficer in your corps, as is called Capting Hellis ?"

"It's not givin' anny moore false alarms ye're afther, is it ?" asked Shilrick, contemptuously. "Bekase I wouldn't advise ye to let Captain Ellis, or *anny* av *our* officers see yez, if *that's* what ye're wantin' to spake about ; or faith it's a pace av their minds they'll be givin' ye, an' small blame to thim !"

"I don't see as it matters to you, what I 'ave to say to the Capting," said Stalker, pompously.

"The sorra bit," replied Shilrick, his eyes gleaming with mischief, "if ye're quite detarmined to vinture, an' mane to thake the consequences, why then *go*, an' wilcome. Sure I was only givin' ye a frindly warnin' to sthare clare av *our* barracks for a shoort thime afther last night's woork, d'ye see. But if ye're bint on seein' Captain Ellis, sure it's his honour that's just gone into barracks as I came out, about half-an-hour ago."

"Ah !—then I'd best go at once," answered Stalker.

"Thru for ye," replied Shilrick, quietly.

"Well ! good evening, young chap, an' don't go a loiterin' about these 'ere roads, it's after sunset, mind," said Stalker.

"All right !" cried Shilrick, "the top av the avenin' to yez. An' woorse luck to ye, the spiteful ould spalpane that ye are !" added the boy as Stalker was disappearing in the distance. "Sure now, who'd be a pathrol or a watchman, at all, at all ?" exclaimed Shilrick, contemptuously, after Stalker had left him. "There's somethin' so mane in the way they go crapin' an philantherin' about, to see what they can find out agin dacent, honest people. Och !" he continued, enthusiastically, "'tis the souldier's that's the grand life, en irely |. It's all open, honest fightin' wid *us*. Our enemies know we're enemies an' our friends know we're friends. As to the Marines—sure there's not a single cowardly, false heart in the whole av the dear ould corps, at all, at all ; 'tis

always an' iver loyal and thrue, an' the bravest av the brave they are!" he added, proudly, as he turned, and once more retraced his steps to Glencree Barracks, to find, if possible, some opportunity of delivering to Eveleen Corrie, the letter that had been entrusted to his care, by Anty Kinahan.

It may be considered that Shilrick O'Toole was a very partial judge of the merits of his own corps. Yet it is well known that his favourable opinion was universally shared then, as it is now.

It has been said, that it would be difficult to find the country in which a marine has never set foot. Certain it is, that there have never existed braver, or more loyal soldiers on the face of the earth, and no regiment, nor corps, in the United Kingdom, could produce a record that contains more deeds of bravery, and noble daring, more unselfish acts of courage—on the parts of both officers and men, than the Royal Marines, who have ever played such conspicuous parts in the history of England's battles, by sea, and land.

England and Wales, Ireland, and Scotland, have *all* from time to time contributed to their ranks, and side by side, or distributed throughout the corps, we have heard the accents of those united lands, and each country alike has ever had true reason to be proud of those of her sons who have at all times so honourably and bravely served their country in this gallant corps.

CHAPTER IV.

"She sung of love—while o'er her lyre,
The rosy rays of evening fell,
As if to feed with their soft fire
The soul within that trembling shell.
The same rich light hung o'er her cheek
And played around those lips that sung
And spoke, as flowers would sing and speak,
If love could lend their leaves a tongue."

MOORE.

When Shilrick O'Toole returned to barracks he found that it would yet be some hours before he could see Eveleen Corrie. He chanced to meet Finch, Colonel Corrie's servant, who told him that his master was entertaining guests at dinner that evening, two or three officers belonging to the Cavalry regiment stationed in the neighbourhood, and a few ladies, who, like Mrs. Corrie, being Irish, or having friends in Ireland, had availed themselves of the opportunity of accompanying their husbands on the expedition; for it must be confessed that the military were, generally speaking, inclined to doubt the probability of any great or important rising in the country, and considered that the reports which had reached them in England, and had been the cause of their being sent to Ireland, were much exaggerated, and they thought that the Rebels were not then, and, indeed, never would be, prepared to rise in determined opposition to the regular troops, who could, within a few hours' notice, be sent to quell a rebellion should the Rebel forces prove themselves to be ten times more powerful than they were at that time.

Shilrick was much disconcerted when he found that he could not then see Eveleen Corrie; however, on Finch inform-

ing him that the Colonel's guests would be leaving early, as some of the officers required to return to their own barracks before nine o'clock, and the ladies, in these troublous times did not care to be out late after nightfall, he decided that he would wait until after tattoo, and hoped he might then be able to accomplish his purpose, as he knew that it was Colonel Corrie's habit to go a round of the barracks every night at nine o'clock, which would afford him the opportunity he desired, of seeing Eveleen without the Colonel being aware of the interview. And thus commenced the fatal secrecy, for which, in the future, Eveleen Corrie and others were to pay so dearly.

A few hours later, the rays of a brilliant moon were streaming in softly at the open window of an old-fashioned room in Colonel Corrie's quarters at Glencree Barracks, falling with a pale, chastened light on the rich tapestry curtains and antique furniture, on the china bowls filled with fragrant Spring flowers, and upon the form of Eveleen Corrie, as she sat on a low ottoman, with one hand lingering on the strings of a harp that stood beside her, while the other was gently caressing the silky head of little Nap, as he lay curled up in a ball on the end of her train, a luxurious couch of his own choice and arrangement, for Nap was fond of comfort and luxury. It was near nine o'clock, Colonel Corrie's guests had just departed, and he, with Captain Annesley, had accompanied two of the cavalry officers, intending to escort them so far on their way, and to talk over military matters, which were of mutual interest. Through the open window the soldiers could be seen passing to and fro across the barrack square, in the centre of which drummers and buglers were assembling in readiness to beat the tattoo. Private Marlow, on duty as sentry, was marching up and down in front of Colonel Corrie's window, and seemed unable to resist glancing in from time to time, as he passed, his gaze resting with respectful admiration on the fair form of the beautiful girl with the soul-lit eyes, whose thoughts were, at that moment, so far away from the scene before her.

No one could fail to admire Eveleen Corrie. In appearance she bore a considerable resemblance to her cousin, Morven O'Neill; there were the same eyes, with their vary-

ing expression and colour, the same refined and delicate features, the firm, yet tender lips. The dark brown hair was not powdered, but was drawn back from her forehead, and arranged after the fashion of the day, high in front, and falling in long curls over her shoulders. Her complexion was usually pale, but the delicate colour came and went in her face with every passing feeling and emotion. On this particular evening, Eveleen's beauty was much enhanced by the dress she wore. A skirt of primrose-coloured quilted silk, with an over train of the palest blue brocade, the bodice of which was made high to the neck, at the back, and cut square in front, being finished by soft folds of muslin, among which nestled a bunch of primroses with their bright green leaves. Sleeves reaching to the elbow, long white mittens, and a black velvet ribbon, to which was attached a jewelled cross, round her neck ; primrose satin high-heeled shoes with jewelled buckles completed her charming costume. Very different was Eveleen's graceful and becoming attire, to that of the evening dress of some of our Society ladies of the present day ; many of whom would probably feel indignant were their modesty called into question, and yet, who are content and willing to appear, night after night in the merest apology for a bodice, which article of apparel seems indeed threatening to follow in the wake of the sleeves that, for evening attire, have already almost disappeared, and to become a thing of the past.

After the guests had departed, Evelyn had been singing for some time, in a voice of sweetest pathos, unknown to herself, charming several listeners, who were even now waiting outside, in the hope that they might hear again the lovely music of her harp. Nor were they disappointed, for once more a few tender chords were struck, and the fair musician commenced, in a voice full of the deepest feeling and expression, the old Irish song :

“ Dear Harp of Erin, let thy strain
Re-echo through the vale again,
Nor thus in silence sleep so long,
But wake at once thy powers of song.”

“ May thy sweet voice at evening hour,
Be heard in youth and beauty's bower
While notes of gladness win the smile,
From hearts that wept in Erin's Isle.”

Long after Eveleen's voice had died away in the last pathetic notes of the song, she still lingered beside her harp, her fingers apparently playing idly with the strings, yet bringing forth the richest of chords, the sweetest harmony; but with a sad cadence running through all, as though coming events were truly casting their shadows before them, chilling her heart with their silent prophecies of dark sorrow in the future. “ Oh ! Erin, Erin, my country ! ” murmured Eveleen, sadly, when she had ceased playing, “ when will this strife and sorrow cease, and thy people be cheered by the sunshine of peace and happiness ? Oh ! *how* will it—*when* will it all end ? ” At this moment, the dreamer was roused from her reverie by the sound of the evening tattoo played on the drums and fifes—the sweetest of all martial music—she hastily rose to her feet, and approached the window, just as the young drummers and fifers marched past to the old Irish tune of “ Planxty Kelly.”

These proceedings were, however, most distasteful to Nap, who had not only been suddenly awakened out of a comfortable sleep, but also heard the tune that, for some reason or other, had always been especially obnoxious to him; he was therefore not long in showing his indignation by leaping on to a chair near the window, and by accompanying the music with a long and mournful howl, but he was somewhat appeased when he discovered that Shilrick was with the disturbers of his peace, and at last condescended to wag his tail in acknowledgment when his friend gravely, and approvingly, shook his drumstick at him in passing.

“ What a lovely night it is,” said Eveleen, as she stood at the window. “ How the moonlight glances on the bright uniforms and the bugles and drums of the players, making them look so picturesque as they pass round the old barrack square. I should like to be out to-night. What a pity it is

that ladies cannot wander about at their own will and pleasure. How beautiful the Glen of the Dargle will be looking just now—and in this light.” Farther thought and dreaming on the part of Eveleen was now dispelled by the entrance of Mrs. Corrie, a handsome, stately lady, with a pleasant face, and graceful manner. Very elegant she appeared on this evening, in her rich dress of white lace, and train of amethyst brocaded satin, with the gleaming jewels on her neck and arms, and in the buckles of her shoes, her handsome jewelled fan, and the neckerchief of priceless lace that was crossed in front and confined with an amethyst pin. Her hair, which was powdered, was dressed in a style that well became the mature beauty of her face.

“What ! alone, Eveleen—and in the dark ?” she exclaimed, as she entered the room. “Then your father and Captain Annesley have not yet returned ?”

“No, mother,” replied Eveleen, as she turned from the window and went to meet Mrs. Corrie. “I have just been enjoying the moonlight, it is clear as day outside. And I was thinking how much I should like to be in the Dargle now, to see the beautiful glen in the fair moonlight.”

“My dear Eveleen !” cried Mrs. Corrie, her sense of propriety considerably shocked on hearing Eveleen’s wish. “What romantic nonsense !—and in a girl brought up as you have been,” she added, as in her most stately manner she seated herself in one of the luxurious, handsomely-cushioned easy-chairs.

“Ah !” replied Eveleen, smiling, “I fear that the most severely prosaic life would not quite crush the love of romance out of *my* heart. But, mother mine,” she continued, as she brought a low stool, and sitting at Mrs. Corrie’s feet, looked anxiously up at her, “I wanted to tell you something.”

“Well, Eveleen, what is it ?” asked Mrs. Corrie, a softened expression stealing over her face, as she looked into the troubled eyes now raised to hers.

“Mother, I feel so sad to-night. I know not why ; but I cannot shake off the feeling that some great trouble—some sorrow or misfortune is hovering over us.”

"Nonsense, child!" replied Mrs. Corrie, "you have been reading too many romances lately, or dreaming too long in the moonlight, neither of which is good for an over-imaginative nature, such as yours; but," she added, cheerfully, "Captain Annesley will soon be back now; I suppose he will return with your father, for it is early yet. *Armoric* will be the best person to exorcise and chase away the phantoms that you have conjured up for yourself."

"Oh! pray do not mention this to *Armoric*, mother; he would think me foolish to be troubled with such fancies."

"What did you think of our guests to-day, Eveleen?" asked Mrs. Corrie, suddenly.

"I am not quite sure," replied Eveleen, thoughtfully. "I dislike Lieutenant Rochfort."

"Why?" inquired Mrs. Corrie. "Is it because *Armoric* does not like him? The young cavalry officer did not seem to return your unfavourable opinion, Eveleen," she continued, smiling, "he paid you the most devoted attention; more, I think, than was necessary, even from a guest, to his host's daughter, certainly more than Captain Annesley cared to see. My dear, do you think *Armoric* is of a jealous nature?" queried Mrs. Corrie, anxiously.

"Oh, no!" replied Eveleen, decidedly, and there was a strange, sad expression on the sweet face, as she thought within her own mind that perhaps he did not care enough for her, to make him resent, very much, the attentions of another.

It was an extraordinary fact, how these two lovers tormented themselves; for Annesley was, at times, little better than Eveleen in doubting the depth of her affection for himself.

While the real true state of the case was, that Annesley loved her with the whole strength of his heart and soul, while so deep was Eveleen's feeling for him, that she would have considered no sacrifice too great to make for his sake.

"It certainly seems to be a case of war to the knife, when *Armoric* and Lieutenant Rochfort meet; your father says they remind him of fire, and gunpowder. There must be some strange, unaccountable antagonism, between them," remarked Mrs. Corrie, thoughtfully.

"I have always disliked Lieutenant Rochfort, ever since the day that we met him first when he kicked poor little Nap out of his path, because he chanced to be in his way," said Eveleen.

"I remember," answered Mrs. Corrie, "but he did not do it for nothing. Armoric spoke very sharply to him at the time."

"Yes," replied Eveleen, "and he told him that any man, woman or child who disliked animals, or was cruel to them, was one to be mistrusted by his fellow creatures."

"Nap seems to share your feeling of dislike towards the young lieutenant," said Mrs. Corrie, smiling.

"Nap's instinct never misleads him," answered Eveleen.

The foregoing conversation was here interrupted by a knock at the door, and the appearance of Finch, Colonel Corrie's soldier servant.

"There is a drummer at the door, ma'am," said Finch, to Mrs. Corrie, "he is very anxious to speak to Miss Corrie; and please, ma'am," he added, with some hesitation, "he will not give his message, as he says *he must* see Miss Corrie, *herself*."

"What can he want with me, I wonder?" said Eveleen.

"Perhaps he has some friends who are poor or ill, and who may require some little assistance," answered Mrs. Corrie. "Well! show him in here, Finch, we can see him now;—and bring lights with you."

"Very good, ma'am," replied Finch.

"What *can* he want with *me*?" repeated Eveleen, anxiously, and hastily rising to her feet.

"Why Eveleen!" exclaimed Mrs. Corrie, regarding her daughter with astonishment, "what *is* the matter with you this evening? You seem as troubled and nervous as if you expected some great calamity to befall us, and that the appearance of this drummer was but the precursor of misfortune."

"Heaven grant that it may not be so!" murmured Eveleen, as she turned away to prevent her mother seeing that her face was as pale as death, and her hands clasped tightly together to hide their nervous trembling. "I have a fear—a presentiment," she continued, in a low voice, "I can

feel I can *see* the shadow of trouble that is hovering over us."

Before Mrs. Corrie had time to reply to Eveleen's strange yet prophetic words, the door was again thrown open, and Finch entered, carrying two massive silver lamps which he placed upon the table. Then, after drawing the curtains across the window, he turned to the door and ushered in Shilrick O'Toole, who was warmly greeted by his faithful friend Nap.

"Save all here!" was Shilrick's quaint, and thoroughly Irish salutation, as he stood in the doorway, with his hat in his hand, respectfully waiting until Mrs. Corrie or Eveleen addressed him.

"Oh! it is Shilrick O'Toole," exclaimed Eveleen, smiling, much relieved on seeing the bright face of the boy in whom both she and Captain Annesley had always felt so much interest.

"Sure, an' it is, me lady," replied Shilrick.

Never before had the staid and exemplary Finch found so many trifling things to arrange and re-arrange about the room—never before had the lamps required so much attention, as on this particular evening; but then, as he afterwards explained to the cook, "it was all so myster'us—sum'at about it as he couldn't make out nohow."

And as in all his long service with Colonel Corrie, nothing that was "myster'us" or concerning which there was "sum'at as he couldn't make out" having ever before occurred, his curiosity on this occasion may perhaps be excused. At last, however, seeing that Shilrick had no intention of speaking in his presence, he slowly and unwillingly left the room, with a look of injured innocence upon his countenance.

"Come in, my boy," said Mrs. Corrie, kindly, to Shilrick, as the door closed upon Finch. "Come forward and tell us what we can do for you."

"You wished to speak to me, Shilrick?" asked Eveleen.

"Sure, Miss Corrie, 'tis a thrifle av a message I have for ye; a letther that I was tould to give to no one but yersilf," replied Shilrick, as he advanced into the room, and approached Eveleen. "It's mighty particular, that no one else

aven *knows* annythin' about it onless maybes 'tis her ladyship, Misthress Corrie, an,' " he added, mysteriously lowering his voice, and going closer to Eveleen, "the sorra bit must his honour, the Colonel, or Captain Annesley, hear av it, at all, at all."

"And why not the Colonel, Shilrick?" demanded Mrs. Corrie, indignantly, as she rose hastily and stood beside Eveleen. "Who dares to send letters that the Colonel may not see? You can take it back to the sender, and say that we have no clandestine correspondence here."

Shilrick remained silent for some seconds, looking inquiringly at Mrs. Corrie, not having the most remote idea what "clandestine correspondence" might mean. Eveleen, however, quickly came to the rescue.

"Would it not be better," she asked, "to see the contents of the letter first, mother, and ascertain by whom it was sent?"

"Well, perhaps you are right, Eveleen," replied Mrs. Corrie. "Give *me* the letter then, Shilrick!" she added, turning to him.

"If it's not displasin' to ye, ma'am," he said, respectfully, but determinedly, "sure I'd rayther give it into Miss Corrie's own hands, as I gave me word I'd do it."

"As you will, then," answered Mrs. Corrie, with a tone of impatience in her voice, as she turned from him and resumed her former position in the easy-chair.

"Who sent the letter, Shilrick?" asked Eveleen.

"Sure, it's just that same I can't tell yer ladyship, as I don't know mesilf," he replied. "'Twas Anty Kinahan, the daughter av ould Misthress Kinahan av the 'Shamrock' that gave it to me this afthernoon, but the sorra wan av her would tell where it came from, or who sint it."

"Let me have the letter then, Shilrick," said Eveleen.

"There it is, Miss Corrie, an' sure," he added, as he put it into her hand, "'tis the bad luck that'll be wid mesilf for bringin' the same letther, if there's anny harm, or anny bad news in it, at all, at all."

"Can you wait for a few minutes?" asked Eveleen. "I may, perhaps, require to send an answer."

"Wid the greatest pleasure in life, me lady," replied

the drummer. "An' sure, if there's annythin' I can do for yersilf, it's proud I'll be enthirely."

Shilrick then retired to the other end of the room, to wait there until Eveleen had read her letter; but it must be confessed that he waited in some fear and anxiety, expecting every moment that Colonel Corrie would return, or Captain Annesley make his appearance, and discover him there, for he knew well the difficulty he would have in hiding from his officers the cause of his presence, and at that hour. Poor little Nap went gleefully up to him, and tried to attract his attention, but for the first time he found that his friend was in no mood for play, and so returned disconsolately to his cushion on the end of the ottoman.

It must here be understood that the Corries were not aware that Morven O'Neill had joined the Rebels in Wicklow, or that he was likely to have any share in the anticipated rising.

Some years before, during a previous disturbance in Ireland, Morven's father, Shane O'Neill, had taken part against the English Government, and this being discovered, he was compelled, with others, to fly the country, and afterwards died in exile, his Irish estates having been confiscated, and it was thought by many at the time, as there had been no fair trial, that O'Neill had been treated with gross injustice.

His wife, who had accompanied him through all his misfortunes and perils, did not long survive the husband, who had been even dearer to her in his sorrow and trouble than in the days of his prosperity.

Before leaving the country, Shane O'Neill had contrived to send his only son Morven, then in his childhood, to his mother's brother, Colonel Corrie, who was at that time a young man, but whose loving care of the desolate, homeless boy, was beyond all praise. Thus, for some years, had Morven O'Neill and his cousin, Eveleen Corrie, grown up together, like brother and sister, Mrs. Corrie bestowing upon the former the affection she might have given to a son of her own. Morven, being a great admirer of his uncle, and having an ardent desire for a military career, adopted the army as his profession, and naturally selected that branch of the service to which Colonel Corrie belonged.

He was not long ere he won a soldier's laurels, and though so young returned from his first campaign covered with glory. A short time after, however, some injustice was done to Morven by the military authorities, and the hot, fiery blood of the O'Neills was once more fairly roused in his heart, and, while in this state of mind, some old friends of his father, who added fuel to the flame, with their representations of the injustice that was being shown to his countrymen, and to himself also, in the manner of the confiscation of his father's estates, which were then in the hands of absent English landlords, who knew nothing, and cared less, for the poor tenantry left to the mercy of strange agents, and who, in many instances, treated them with the greatest harshness and severity, so worked upon the warm feelings and proud heart of Morven, while they further stirred his generous and impetuous nature with their recital of the miseries and sorrows of his dearly loved country, that he resigned his commission, and joined the society of "*The United Irishmen*" in Dublin ; but, when the Government attempted to put down this movement, and arrested some of the leaders, Morven O'Neill, with a few others, after many hairbreadth escapes, contrived to reach France, where they remained in exile until the time when our story opens, and the disastrous rebellion of 1798 broke out.

Thus, Mrs. Corrie and Eveleen were quite unprepared to hear that Morven was once more in Ireland, and Eveleen, on glancing at the outside of the letter just given to her by Shilrick O'Toole, was much startled on recognising the handwriting of her absent cousin, whom she had thought so far away. It was, therefore, with considerable anxiety and emotion that she approached Mrs. Corrie, and, in a low voice, said to her, "Mother ! this letter is from Morven O'Neill."

"From Morven ?" exclaimed Mrs. Corrie, in astonishment. "Oh, Eveleen, where is he ? Surely not in Ireland, and at such a time ! Read the letter quickly—let us hear what he says."

With trembling hands, Eveleen opened the letter, and as she knelt beside her mother, they read together the following :

"EVELEEN, DEAR COUSIN,

"I dare to hope that in all my wanderings, during the long time we have been parted, that my little cousin, my playmate, has not quite forgotten me. You will be surprised to hear that I am so near and still more, that being so near, I do not hasten to see you. Oh ! my cousin, you know not the happiness it would be to me to hear your welcome—to feel again the sincere sympathy of the one who used to be as a loving sister to me in our early days ; for Eveleen, my heart is often sad and weary now, but I cannot—dare not come to you. You know not that the leader of the brave band of patriots in the neighbourhood, known as the ' Bold Boys of Wicklow,' is none other than myself—your cousin, Morven O'Neill, now passing under the name of '*Michael Cluny*.' Oh, Eveleen ! we are often hard pressed, and driven from stronghold to stronghold, in the mountains, by your father and the men of our old corps, the brave comrades who used to be my friends in the days that are gone. Why does my uncle persecute us so constantly, and with such unremitting persistence ? Oh ! if I could but see him, if I could but persuade him to see, as I see, the glory of the bright star of liberty, as it seems to beckon us, and to light us on our way, to win the laurels of victory, or the patriot's grave. But, alas ! it cannot be, I know his opinions too well, and I know that he is a true soldier, and would sacrifice all to a sense of his duty ; therefore you must say nought to him of this letter. I know that I can trust you, dear cousin, *you* would *never* betray us. I could not resist the temptation of writing and perhaps receiving in reply a few words of sympathy from you, and the dear aunt from whom I ever received such true affection. I have much to tell you. Would that it were possible for you to meet me somewhere, perhaps it *might* be so arranged. Do not blame me for what I have done ; believe me, Eveleen ! I have thought well and earnestly before I joined this band of my noble and enthusiastic countrymen, who are thus devoting their lives to the salvation of their native land. I considered long, ere I chose the pathway I am now treading, and I know, that

though rough and perilous in the present, it leads to glory and freedom in the future. Dear cousin, I hear often of you, through the peasantry who are favourable to our cause. I know that you are one day to be married to my old comrade, Armoric Annesley ; it is well ! for he is a brave, honourable man, and one whose love and truth will stand the test of time and adversity. May many a long year of unclouded joy be yours. Whether I may ever meet you all again, I cannot tell. I can only hope. Farewell, Eveleen ! and believe me, you, and all the dear ones at home, will ever have, as long as life shall last, the fervent prayers and blessings of your cousin,

MORVEN O'NEILL."

"Oh, Morven ! poor cousin Morven !" said Eveleen, sorrowfully, when she had read the letter.

"Oh, foolish, foolish boy !" exclaimed Mrs. Corrie. "How *could* he take such a step ? He has wrecked his whole life."

"What can we do for him, mother ? asked Eveleen, anxiously.

"Nothing, Eveleen !" replied Mrs. Corrie, impatiently, "he has made his own choice, and I know him well enough to feel certain that he will abide by it. Oh ! what will be the end of his wild, romantic folly ?"

"He must have an answer to his letter, mother," said Eveleen, sadly, as the tears fell fast from her eyes ; "he says that he is often sad and weary."

"Sad and weary !" cried Mrs. Corrie, indignantly, "I am sure I do not wonder at it. Oh ! the miserable, infatuated boy ! Eveleen ! if your father knew of this, it would almost break his heart. Since Morven's father left his son in our charge, we have loved the bright, handsome lad as if he were our own. With what pride we watched the clever child growing into manhood, hoping that he would prove a joy to ourselves, and an honour to his country."

"Ah, mother, what is to be done ?" asked Eveleen, earnestly, "Perhaps if we could only see him we might persuade him to leave these men—to return to us again."

"Eveleen !" replied Mrs. Corrie, "you are mad to dream

of such a thing. You could as easily stem the downward course of a mountain torrent, as turn an *O'Neill* from any course he had decided on pursuing. And your poor father," she added, sorrowfully, "used to be so proud of the loyalty of his family; your ancestors, Eveleen, have ever been noble, brave, and loyal; but now the spell is broken!—and to think that it should be by the act of your father's nephew! Oh, Morven, Morven!—poor, misguided boy! was it for this sad end we cherished you in our hearts?"

"What a terrible risk he incurred in sending this letter; but Morven was always so brave and daring," said Eveleen, proudly; the enormity of her young cousin's crime, in having become chief of the Mountain Rebels, not seeming to strike her romantic heart in the same manner in which it had affected the more prosaic mind of her stately mother.

In their excitement, Eveleen and Mrs. Corrie had almost forgotten the presence of Shilrick, but they had been conversing in low tones, and the boy was at too great a distance, and too much occupied with his own thoughts and anxieties respecting the appearance of Colonel Corrie, of whose return he was in momentary expectation.

"How do you propose sending a reply to this letter, Eveleen?" asked Mrs. Corrie.

"Perhaps Shilrick O'Toole would give it to Anty Kinahan, Morven seems to have been able to trust her," answered Eveleen, for the first time remembering Shilrick, and looking anxiously at him. "I hope he has not heard," she murmured in a low whisper to Mrs. Corrie.

"No, I think not," said Mrs. Corrie. "But with regard to sending an answer to Morven by him. You must remember that Shilrick can read writing, (Armoric taught him to do that), and he would see the address. At present, he evidently does not know who was the sender of this letter to you, and I scarcely think it right to implicate this boy in the matter, by making him the bearer of a message to Morven; it is bad enough for *us*, even under the strange circumstances, to hold secret intercourse with the Rebels. Oh! what *would* your father say if he knew of it?"

"Well, mother," said Eveleen, "I can ask Shilrick to send Anty Kinahan to me, or I could meet her somewhere."

"I think it would be best for you to meet her, Eveleen," replied Mrs. Corrie.

"Shilrick !" cried Eveleen, rising and turning to the silent figure near the window.

"Yes, me lady !" he answered, coming quickly forward.

"Will you see Anty Kinahan for me, if possible, and tell her that I shall be greatly obliged if she will meet me near the cottage of Lough Bray, to-morrow morning, at eleven o'clock, as I wish very much to speak to her ; but do not mention this to anyone else, and be sure that you give my message to Anty herself.—Will you do this for me, Shilrick ?" asked Eveleen.

"Sure, me lady, 'tis me life I'd give to sarve ye," replied Shilrick, gallantly. "There's been somethin' in that letther," he murmured to himself, "somethin' that's made Misthress Corrie an' Miss Eveleen sad enthirely ; troth I wish I hadn't brought it, so I do."

At this moment all were startled—by a quick, sharp bark from Nap, which was followed by the challenge of the sentry outside the window.

"Halt ! Who goes there ?" called Marlow.

"A friend," was the reply in Annesley's voice.

"Pass friend,—all is well !" answered Marlow.

The challenge and the reply, fell distinctly on the ears of the three occupants of the room, who were now standing near the door, looking in consternation at each other. Shilrick, however, was the first to speak.

"There's some wan comin' ; sure they've sthopped at the dure," he cried, excitedly.

"Oh, mother ! it is Armoric ; I heard his voice," exclaimed Eveleen.

"What is to be done ?" said Mrs. Corrie, hastily. "Shilrick must not be seen here on any account ; they will ask him questions."

"Faith an' they will, me lady," cried Shilrick, in despair. "Oh ! what will I do, at all, at all. 'Tis his honour Colonel Corrie—an' there's Captain Annesley wid him, too, I hear him spakin' ; an' it's a mighty great power the captain has av findin' out iverythin'—thim eyes av his same to look into

yer very heart. Ochone! 'tis done for I am this thime enthirely."

In great distress, Shilrick hurried towards one of the doors, but was stopped by Mrs. Corrie.

"It is no use going that way, Shilrick, my boy," she said, "you will meet them face to face."

"Oh! begorrah, then what'll I do, annyhow?" cried the drummer, desperately.

"See here! I had forgotten," exclaimed Eveleen, hurriedly. "Quick, Shilrick! go in there," she added, as she half pushed him into a doorway, on the opposite side of the room. "You will see a low window, you can get out through that, but you must be very quiet, and move as softly as you can."

"But, Eveleen! there is the sentry," said Mrs. Corrie.

"Shilrick must wait until his back is turned, and then get out quickly while the sentry is going in the opposite direction."

"I'll do it!" said Shilrick, eagerly, "sure I'll do it, ma'am, an' the good luck be wid ye for thinkin' av it. The top av the avenin' to yer ladyships."

Just as Shilrick was disappearing through the doorway, Nap, who had been roused from his sleep, leapt off the ottoman, made a rush at him, and, partly in play, partly in indignation at his precipitate exit, caught hold of his coat sleeve, and tore off a considerable portion of the braid. When the door was closed upon Shilrick, Nap still remained with his nose pressed underneath it, and at the same time barking, and wagging his tail in a manner that must have betrayed to the most unsuspecting onlooker that something unusual was going on within that room; Eveleen, however, caught him up in her arms—and only just in time—for at that moment Colonel Corrie and Captain Annesley entered the room.

CHAPTER V.

“ Cold, cold, the heart must surely be,
Barren the mind and rude
That could not strike the wild harp’s glee
In this dear solitude.
Oh ! ’tis a place for saint or sage,
’Tis Nature’s wildest hermitage.”

M’COMB.

There is, perhaps, no spot in all the fair Emerald Isle, upon which Nature has dealt out her gifts with a more lavish hand, than the weird and beautiful glen, known as the Dargle, in the County Wicklow. The rocks on either side of this ravine, it is said, rise, in some parts to a height of three hundred feet, the slopes being completely covered with dense and beautiful oak woods, and clothed with native wild flowers growing in profusion. The foliage, which is of every conceivable shade, is interspersed with rugged rocks and beetling cliffs, and the whole combined together, forms a landscape of the most romantic beauty and grandeur. Here and there, too, appear pretty banks and dells, and verdant nooks, while underlying all the dense and varied foliage, the river Dargle flows calmly on its course.

Perhaps, however, the most wildly picturesque spot is that called “ The Lover’s Leap.” A high projecting cliff, at the very head of the ravine, from whence there is a truly magnificent view of the entire glen.

Here, far away from the noisy world, there is nought to disturb the solemn silence of the scene, save the sweet singing of birds, the gentle ripple of the river against its rocky bed, and the rush of the torrent flowing over the

rugged, verdure-clad rocks, and falling with seething, snowy foam into the river below.

In years long past—in the reign of King Edward III.—some of the wildest portions of the glen are said to have given shelter to the minstrels of Ireland, who were cruelly persecuted on account of the supposed rebellious character of their lyrics.

Early one morning in May, a few weeks after the events recorded in our last chapter, the ferns, flowers and rocks in the Dargle were still sparkling with bright dewdrops, as the sun shone down upon them, with a soft, tender light, penetrating the canopy of cool, green leaves that afforded shade and shelter to a projecting, moss-covered bank—near one of the higher paths leading through the Glen—on which was seated Thalia Coghlan, a young peasant girl.

“The Beauty of Bray,” Thalia was often called, for, though not belonging to Bray she was well known there; as every fine day, during certain seasons, she might be seen in the little town, with her basket of fresh, fragrant ferns and flowers, by the sale of which she was able to assist herself and her aged grandmother in getting a livelihood. She had long been an orphan, and her family had always been poor—miserably poor—but Thalia being active and industrious, had worked hard in every possible way, and now contrived to maintain herself and her old and helpless grandmother, the only relation now left to her in all the wide world. The sale of her flowers and fern roots—for the Dargle is famous for the variety and beauty of its ferns—added something to her hard-earned store; her pretty face going far towards tempting purchasers, who had it not been for that, and her singularly winning manner and wistful expression, might otherwise have passed the solitary flower-girl with only a passing glance.

Most truly was Thalia Coghlan entitled to be styled beautiful. The well-shaped little head was crowned with a wealth of dark auburn hair, the rippling, wavy masses of which were gathered from off her forehead, and arranged in a simple plaited coil at the back. A complexion, the delicate colouring of which a Belgravian belle might have envied; pretty features, long dark eyelashes, shading large lustrous

grey eyes, and a mouth which bore the sweetest, tenderest of expressions.

Thalia's dress, made in the usual style of the Irish peasant girls of that day, was of the very humblest, plainest of materials. The short petticoat of dark-blue serge showed to advantage the pretty feet and ankles, encased as they were in blue stockings, and black leather brogues with steel buckles. The tucked-up skirt and bodice of flowered chintz, the bright blue neckerchief, and the red cloak, the hood of which had fallen back off her head, and, owing to the warmth of the morning air, had been allowed to remain so, all seemed to suit the pretty little form, every movement of which was graceful, as she leant over the basket of flowers at her side, carefully arranging and re-arranging the bunches, and the roots for sale.

But Thalia Coghlan was not alone on this bright Spring morning. Standing beside her, and tenderly bending over her, was a stalwart young Irish peasant, clad in a long grey frieze coat with a cape, a bright crimson neckerchief, grey breeches, blue stockings, and thick brogues with large buckles. A soft, high-crowned hat of grey felt shaded the very handsome features of Kerry O'Toole, for such was the name of Thalia's companion. Kerry somewhat resembled his brother Shilrick in features and expression, but while Shilrick was very fair, Kerry was of a dark, gipsy cast of countenance, with rich colouring and brilliant, dusky eyes.

While Thalia was busily gathering together the bunches of violets and primroses that lay scattered around them, Kerry was engaged in the romantic occupation of twining a few of the stray flowers in Thalia's hair, at the same time singing softly the well-known words :

“ Though the bard to purer fame may soar,
When wild youth's past ;
Though he win the wise who frown'd before,
To smile at last ;
He'll never meet a joy so sweet,
In all his noon of fame,
As when first he sung to woman's ear
His soul-felt flame,
And, at every close, she blush'd to hear
The one lov'd name ! ”

Silence reigned for some moments after Kerry had concluded his song, but the deep blushes on Thalia's cheeks, as she still bent over her flowers, betrayed that she was far from being insensible to the loving tones in the voice of the singer, or the tender touch of his brown fingers among the coils of her hair.

At last Kerry, growing impatient at the long silence, and bending down to her until his lips almost touched her ear, he said, earnestly:

"Thalia! why won't ye spake to me, *mavourneen*? Sure 'tis a mighty dale av attintion ye do be payin' to thim bits av flowers; if *I* could only get as much from ye, it's glad I'd be enthirely."

"Oh! Kerry dear," replied Thalia, softly, as she raised her head, and, looking up, met the loving gaze of the dark eyes that were bent upon her, "sure I've listhened an' I've listhened to ye this many a dhay; but it always comes to the same in the ind. What moor *can* I do, at all, at all?"

"Ye can give me an answer to the quistion I'm always axin' ye, Thalia Coghlan," said Kerry, eagerly, "ye can consint to let me ax his riverince, Father Bernard, to spake the words for us at wanst, whin I want ye; onless," he continued, jealously, and with a clouded brow, "onless it's another bhoy ye're wantin', or that ye love betther nor mesilf, which is like enough, for sure it's poor an' rough I am, an' there's manny a fine bhoy that would be proud to win *your* love, annyhow."

"An' is it lovin' another bhoy betther nor yersilf, ye think I'd be afther?" asked Thalia. "Ah! no, no, Kerry *agrah*!" she added, tenderly. "'Tis yersilf knows *that* isn't the raison, but think, *avourneen*—sure, if it's poor ye are now, what would it be if ye had another to kape besides?"

"An' haven't I ofthen tould ye that *two* can kape out the poverty betther nor *wan*?" asked Kerry, impatiently.

"That's thrue for ye, Kerry," answered Thalia, smiling. "Sure its maybes aisier to bear then. But," she added, with some hesitation, "it's somethin' else I'd nade to be afther doin' to help yersilf, than sellin' flowers, for sure it's little I've been able to do that way these last few dhays."

"Niver mind, Thalia *a-suilish mahmil* ! There's brighter dhays comin'," replied Kerry, hopefully. "Sure there niver was a dhark hour yet that a bright wan didn't come afther it."

"Tis a weary long thime av comin' somethimes though, Kerry *avourneen*," sighed Thalia, shaking her head, despondingly.

"Well then, isn't there the longer thime to have the pleasure av lookin' forward to it?" asked Kerry. "An' sure, Thalia," he continued, persuasively, "it's yersilf knows that the poverty isn't hard to bear wid *love* for company, but it's fit to break the heart whin ye have no wan to care for ye, whether ye're rich or poor, well or ill, stharvin', or in sorrow an' throuble, an' no wan to care what becomes av ye. Oh! Thalia *mavourneen*, it's poor indade they are that have millions av money, if they've no wan to love thim—no heart to call their own."

"Ah! but Kerry *agrah machree*! sure d'ye see it isn't *that* way wid *yersilf*, at all, at all, for ye *have* some wan to love ye, and," added Thalia, shyly, "ye know right well that ye have wan heart to call yer own, enthirely. An' there's yer own brother, Shilrick, that loves ye moor than life."

"Shilrick, is it?" cried Kerry. "Good luck to him, for the dearest, swatest gossoon on earth! But sure, Thalia, he's a drummer in the army, an' he's been away in England for manny a dhay; he's only here now for a shoort thime, he'll have to lave Wicklow agin wid the souldiers, an' thin I'll be all me lone in the world wanst more. An' sure ye couldn't have the heart to see me left that way, Thalia, darlin'?" he asked, coaxingly, as he seated himself beside his companion, and put his arm around her.

"Oh! Kerry *asthore*! what is it I'm to say to ye, at all?" she asked. "Haden't ye betther be lettin' me thry a little longer wid the flowers, or wait until I see if I could maybes get more work, that I might be able to help yersilf annyhow?"

"No, Thalia!" answered Kerry, decidedly. "Sorra bit moor shall ye thry now, darlin', until afther ye're married. Ah! *mavourneen*," he added, with emotion, "we'll be none

the worse for bein' together, an' when the dhark throuble comes, as it must come sooner or later, to all av us in this world, sure the love that burns widin us will fill our hearts wid sunshine, an kape out the cowl'd, the longest, bittherest dhay we can iver live to see."

"Kerry—oh ! Kerry *asthore machree*," cried Thalia, as she hastily rose from her seat. "Oh, why is it ye will kape houldin' out the timptations to me this way ? *Mavourneen*, —*mavourneen* !" she exclaimed, all the deep passionate love in her heart fairly roused by the earnest pleading of her lover, "don't ye know—can't ye see that ivery word ye spake is like a spell, that dhraws me on an' on whether I will or no ; oh, Kerry ! was there iver another colleen in the whole world that loved *her* swateheart, as I love yersilf ? But see," she continued, "how I'd be forgettin' iverywan ilse in thinkin' av me own love an' happiness. Sure *I can't* consint to what ye ax, Kerry—there's grandmother, I couldn't lave her, she's onable to work now, an' I'm the only wan she has to help her ; sure 'tis hersilf that's loved me, an' cared for me since iver I could walk, whin I was left a lone orphan. She couldn't do widout me now, poor ould grandmother !—an' I'll niver forsake her, an' lave her sad an' lonely."

"An' is *that* all that's throublin' ye, jewel av me heart ?" asked Kerry, joyfully, placing his hands upon her shoulders, "then the sorra wan av us will have to do widout ye, at all, at all ; sure it's yer grandmother—long life to her—that'll have the purtiest chair, an' the warmest corner in our shanty, an' wilcome she'll be enthirely. Faith, darlin' !" he added, gently, "all I could do wouldn't repay her for her love an' kindness to my colleen."

"Sure it's yersilf that's the ginerous bhoy, Kerry," said Thalia. "But," she added, doubtfully, "I fear grandmother wouldn't agree to it ; she's too proud to lave her own home—poor though she is—for a sthranger's."

"A sthranger's !" cried Kerry, reproachfully.

"Well, d'ye see, Kerry, I mane *she's* not in love wid yersilf," answered Thalia, smiling. "An' so she maybes mightn't fale the same as us."

"Troth, darlin', that does make a power av difference

enthirely," said Kerry, thoughtfully, "that's thrue enough ; but sure I'll tell ye what I'll do," he continued, eagerly, "I'll go an' see her, an' faith I'll put the comedher on her, an' tell her it's a sarvice she'll be doin' us if she'll be afther comin' to help us to kape the shanty in ordher, an' look to it when we're out."

"Sure 'tis yersilf that's the boy for persuasion, Kerry," exclaimed Thalia, admiringly. "Maybes grandmother will listhen to ye, for she's always mighty plased that annywan should think she's able for work yet, though 'tis many a dhay since she could move from her sate in the ould chimney corner."

"Don't you be afraid, darlin', lave it all to mesilf," said Kerry.

"Oh, look, Kerry!" cried Thalia, suddenly. "Who is it that's comin' this way, I wondher?"

"It's his honour Colonel Corrie, an' Miss Eveleen," answered Kerry, "sure 'tis early for the quality to be in the glen."

Kerry was correct in his supposition, it was Colonel Corrie and Eveleen, who were now approaching. The bright scarlet of the Colonel's uniform was visible at a considerable distance, and his accoutrements glittered in the morning sunshine.

Officers in those days always wore their uniform, they were not ashamed of it ; the terms "officer and gentleman" were synonymous, and it was rare indeed that one holding such military or naval rank, either by his deeds or in the matter of his associates, ever disgraced the noble profession to which he belonged, or brought discredit on the King's commission, which those officers held so gallantly in war, so honourably in the time of peace. And truly Colonel Corrie was a credit to the service, a leal, true gentleman, a brave and loyal soldier. In appearance he was handsome, of distinguished presence, and soldierly bearing.

Eveleen, who accompanied him on this early visit to the Dargle, was looking particularly attractive in her fresh, tasteful, morning attire. The skirt, of a light blue cashmere, was quilted, and being short, showed the blue stockings, and high-heeled black leather shoes with dainty silver buckles.

The tucked-up train and bodice were of a light flowered cashmere, a *befong* neckerchief of white muslin was crossed in front, and confined with a knot of blue ribbon ; long gloves, and a broad-brimmed white straw hat, looped up at one side, and trimmed with a long blue feather, completed her attire.

Very admiring was Thalia Coghlan's glance at Eveleen as she approached, and her eyes wandered over every detail of the pretty graceful form of the Colonel's fair daughter.

"Well, Kerry!" said Colonel Corrie, kindly, as he came up to him, "I see you and Thalia have been enjoying the pleasures of the early morning, like ourselves."

"Yes, yer honour!" answered Kerry, respectfully, lifting his hat to the Colonel.

"All seemed so quiet and peaceful, and the morning so bright, that we thought we would venture out for an early ramble."

"What beautiful flowers you have there, Thalia," said Eveleen, "do you come to the Dargle every morning to gather them?"

"Sure an' I do, Miss Eveleen," answered Thalia, curtseying, "'tis the fresher an' the swater they are if they're gathered wid the early dew on them."

"Have you heard any news the last few days, Kerry, of the movements of the Rebels?" asked the Colonel.

"The sorra word, yer honour."

"It was reported that they had risen in considerable numbers some distance from here;" continued Colonel Corrie, "but thanks to the promptitude and the bravery of the soldiers stationed in the district, the Rebels in *that* quarter were soon defeated."

"Och! bad luck to thim for the ill-mannered craythurs they are that would be givin' such a power av throuble to the brave gintleman, and souldiers, like yer honour."

"That is right, Kerry!" said the Colonel, smiling, "I see that *you* will never be a Rebel."

"Niver, yer honour!" replied Kerry, emphatically.

"How have you been succeeding lately with your flowers, Thalia?" asked Eveleen, kindly.

"Not so well as I'd be likin', Miss Corrie. The papple

don't same to care for the purty flowers now, at all, at all. 'Twas the sthrangers used to buy them, for sure 'tis said there's no violets, or shamrocks so swate, as those that grow in the Glen av the Dargle, bekase"—continued Thalia, as with an expression of awe upon her countenance, she drew nearer to Eveleen, "bekase d'ye see, they do be sayin', hereabouts, that it's the fairies thimselves that attinds to the flowers in this glen, an' sure tis the illigant gard'ners they are enthirely."

"And are there not so many strangers going to Bray now, Thalia?" asked Eveleen, smiling quietly at Thalia's pretty, poetic idea concerning the fairy gardeners.

"No, Miss Eveleen," answered Thalia, "not since the Rebellion broke out, it's too near the mountains, d'ye see; but maybes if Wicklow town wasn't so far, I'd sell more there anny thime. In Bray the pape know me, an' they're always ready wid a kind word an' a smile as they pass, an' sure kind words an' smiles have a mighty great power av plasin': but," she added sighing, and gravely shaking her head, "they won't kape the poverty from our dures."

"You have gathered some lovely primroses and violets to-day, Thalia. And oh! what bright, fresh-looking ferns and shamrocks. I will buy some of your flowers, at any rate," said Eveleen.

"Oh! sure I thank ye, me lady!" cried Thalia, as she rapidly commenced to look through her basket, that she might choose the best flowers for her favourite, Eveleen Corrie.

While Thalia was choosing the flowers, and Eveleen paying for those she had selected, the group in the Dargle were startled by hearing a clear, sweet boy's voice in the distance, and high above them. The beautiful, pathetic old Irish air was rendered still more impressive and effective to the listeners by their romantic and picturesque surroundings and by the rare beauty of the voice of the singer. As he came nearer, they knew that it was Shilrick O'Toole, and were able to distinguish the following words :

" The minstrel boy to the war is gone,
In the ranks of death you'll find him,
His father's sword he has girded on,
And his wild harp slung behind him.

'Land of song!' said the warrior bard,
'Though all the world betrays thee,
One sword, at least, thy rights shall guard,
One faithful harp shall praise thee.

"The minstrel fell! but the foemen's chain
Could not bring his proud soul under:
The harp he loved ne'er spoke again,
For he tore its cords asunder.
And said, 'no chains shall sully thee
Thou soul of love and bravery!
Thy songs were made for the brave and free,
They shall never sound in slavery.'"

"That is Shilrick's voice, where is he, I wonder?" said Colonel Corrie, looking round. "Ah!" he continued, "I see the boy, he is up on the higher path, yonder."

"Sure 'tis the purty voice he has," cried Thalia, enthusiastically.

"So he has, Thalia," replied the Colonel, "and I ought to know it well. Shilrick is our favourite drummer, and many a time in camp and in barracks we have been cheered, and our way beguiled on a weary march, with Shilrick's songs; he is the pet of the corps."

"Sure, yer honour, it's his voice does it, ye should hear it up in the wild mountains, 'tis like a nightingale on a fair summer's avenin'; axin' yer honour's pardon for thakin' up yer thime spakin' about me brother," said Kerry.

"But yer honour will forgive him," added Thalia, "for sure we're all so proud av Shilrick, the boy's so clever enthirely."

"Aye, and good and faithful too; there is not a man or boy in the corps whom I would sooner trust than Shilrick O'Toole," said the Colonel, warmly.

"Here he comes!" exclaimed Eveleen. "Ah! how dangerous—see, he is coming down from the higher path."

Well might Eveleen watch the daring descent of the brave, reckless boy, as he came swiftly down the precipitous side of the ravine, holding on to any bushes or tufts of weeds or grass that came in his way, scarcely pausing for a moment in his fearless course, to find a firm footing in the rocks.

He had observed the group below, and wishing to reach them without delay, had adopted this perilous descent, as a means of attaining his end. At last he stood beside them, safe once more, his face flushed with pleasure and excitement, and Eveleen and Thalia, who had been so anxiously watching him, breathed more freely.

"Well, my boy!" said the Colonel, "I suppose you have come to look for me? I never leave barracks for a few minutes, but I am certain to be wanted."

"Sure, yer honour," answered Shilrick, as he saluted Colonel Corrie, and handed a paper to him, "'Tis a paper I have for yez, sir; ye're wanted immadiate. I sane Mistrhess Corrie, and it's her ladyship tould me that ye'd be comin' this way."

"Ah!" exclaimed the Colonel, hurriedly, on reading the despatch, "the Rebels again! They intend a rising in our neighbourhood; it appears they can muster a considerable number of well-disciplined, well-armed men."

"In this neighbourhood, father?" cried Eveleen, starting, and growing pale to her very lips, "in *this* neighbourhood."

"Yes, Eveleen, we have been expecting it for some time," replied the Colonel. "The information is from good authority, so I believe it will be no false alarm *this* time.—Come Eveleen! we must go at once. Good-bye, Thalia, and Kerry!" he added, courteously, as he hastily turned and left them.

"Good-bye, Thalia, I hope I may see you some day soon again," said Eveleen. "Good-morning, Kerry!"

"The top av the mornin' to the Colonel an' yerrself, Miss Eveleen! an' good luck be wid ye both!" said Kerry and Thalia, the former lifting his hat, and the latter curtsying to Eveleen.

"Oh, Morven, Morven!" murmured Eveleen, sorrowfully, as she followed her father, "your time of danger is fast approaching. Nearer and nearer comes the cloud of trouble and sadness that will soon break over our heads!"

"Shilrick *ma bonchaleen*!" said Kerry, when the Colonel and Eveleen had left them, "sure ye'll be afther tellin' us the news."

"News, is it?" asked Shilrick. "Sure what news would

there be, at all, at all? and " he added, with some importance, "it's not the duty of a souldier to be informin' iverywan av the movements av the throops."

"Sure now, Shilrick," said Thalia, coaxingly, "ye'll tell us all about it?"

"Troth then, it's sorra word I have to tell ye," he replied, "barrin' that the Ribils have risen agin, an' there'll be a little moor fightin' to kape up our spirits, an' make us lively, for sure what's the use av bein' a souldier if there's to be no fightin'?"

While Shilrick and his companions were talking together they did not notice the approach of Jeremiah Stalker, the English patrol. This town-bred gentleman's progress along the rough and narrow path of the Dargle, was certainly slow, and he came stumbling along, at intervals making clutches at the bushes and high ferns as he went along, sometimes even pausing in his anxiety to retain his equilibrium, but at last he reached his destination, and finding himself on a smoother, firmer piece of ground, he resumed his pompous manner, and mode of speech, and addressed Shilrick and his companions.

"Now then! now then! good people; what's hup 'ere? Move hon! move hon! this 'ere aint the proper place for you to be a-standin'. There's most particklar horders that no traffickinck is to be hallowed about these 'ere roads. The Rebels 'as riz, an' we can't tell who's a hinnocent party an' who aint."

"'Tis yersilf kapes mighty clare av those same Ribils, annyhow," remarked Shilrick, quietly.

"Who tould ye to come interfarin' wid dacent, respectable pable, I'd be for axin?" demanded Kerry, indignantly.

Stalker looked fiercely at his questioner for a moment, during which space of time he eyed the stalwart figure before him; the rising colour in Kerry's face, and the angry glitter in his eyes warned him that at least he had to deal with a formidable opponent, then suddenly turning his attention to Shilrick, he roughly seized hold of him by the collar.

"Now, you young chap!" he cried, "it's suspicious—uncommon suspicious—to see *you* a-standing 'ere a doin'

nothink, an' a-lookin' at nothink, you just go for to walk 'ome now."

"Who was it tould ye to thake the direction av ould Ireland?" asked Shilrick, coolly. "You jist lave me alone! ye've nothin' to do wid mesilf, at all, at all. Oh, see!" he added, joyfully, "here's the Captain comin', troth then, 'tis maybes himself that'll give ye a pace av his mind, enthirely, an' small blame to him."

"Why, Stalker!" exclaimed Annesley, angrily, as he joined the group. "What do you mean by this? You are quite exceeding your duty. How dare you lay a finger on my drummer, or any one of our men! You have nothing whatever to do with them. Why, there is my foster-brother, Kerry O'Toole, and Thalia Coghlan, too; Stalker, once and for all, I must request that you do not interfere with these people, they are doing no harm."

"The sorra bit, yer honour," said Kerry, innocently, as he lifted his hat.

"That's throe for ye, sir," added Thalia, curtseying to Annesley.

"Beg parding, sir," said Stalker, "but I 'ad horders for to clear the roads of all hidle loit'ers, an' this 'ere aint the fust time, no nor the second neither, as I've seed this young drummer a-wandering about, without no purpose or hobjeck in view, as you may say, sir."

"I have told you, before now, Stalker, that you have no right to interfere with the troops in this, or any other neighbourhood," said Annesley, indignantly. "Heaven help those over whom you *have* any power!" added the officer, fervently, in an undertone.

"I tould ye that ye'd betther be lavin' mesilf alone," cried Shilrick, triumphantly. "Sure I'm ondher milithairey authority. Och! don't be throublin' anny moor about him, Captin, darlin', troth he's met his match, whin he has Kerry an' mesilf foreninst him," added the boy, mischievously, making a threatening gesture at Stalker.

"And Shilrick, I want you to tell me when you saw Colonel Corrie last, and if he was accompanied by Miss Corrie," said Annesley.

"We saw him about five minutes ago, yer honour, he

passed this way, an' he had Miss Corrie wid him ; 'twas mesilf that was sint afther the Colonel, d'ye see, sir, wid a despatch marked '*immadiate*.' I belave it was about the risin' av thim Ribils agin' somewheres. His honour samed anxious whin he read it, an' went away in a great hurry enthirely, by the shoortest road back to barracks."

"Ah !" remarked Annesley, thoughtfully, "then there may be work for us after all." Annesley then turned to Shilrick and laid his hand kindly on the drummer's shoulder. "Shilrick," he said, impressively, and lowering his voice, "remember, my boy, say not one word of our movements to any of the peasantry."

"Yer honour can thrust me ; the sorra word will I spake, at all, at all," replied Shilrick, saluting Annesley.

"Thalia Coghlan !" said the Captain, now turning to her, "you surely do not intend going to Bray to-day ?"

"Troth, an' I do, yer honour," she replied, smiling.

"There may be danger towards nightfall, the 'Bold Boys' are near at hand ; they are wild, lawless men, Kerry !" continued Annesley. "Are you not afraid for her ?"

"The sorra sthep will she go, Misther Armoric, dear, onless I go wid her," answered Kerry.

"Oh ! then she is safe enough," said Annesley, smiling. "I know well the strength of my foster-brother's arm and the bravery of his heart. I wish you were in our corps, Kerry," he added, earnestly.

Their conversation was here interrupted by the distant sound of the assembly bugle at Glencree Barracks.

"Ah !" exclaimed Shilrick, in great excitement, "sure there's the assembly, yer honour !"

"Yes, my boy," said Annesley, "we must go at once."

"Troth an' we will, sir," cried Shilrick, "I wouldn't miss bein' wid the men, an' in the middle av the fightin' for annythin'."

"An' small blame to ye, Shilrick, 'tis yerself that's the brave bhoy, enthirely," said Kerry.

"Sure, yer honour, will there be anny danger ?" asked Thalia, anxiously.

"I cannot tell, Thalia," replied Annesley, gravely.

Once more the assembly bugle is heard, and though at

such a distance every note comes to them clearly and distinctly through the still morning air.

"There it is again !" murmured Annesley to himself ; "that's Ellis's doing ; what a glorious opportunity for him to take command during the absence of our Colonel and myself. Come, Shilrick !" he added, in a louder tone. "Good-bye to all here !"

"Are ye goin' wid us afther the Ribils, Misther Stalker ?" asked Shilrick, mischievously.

"No ; that is, not hexactly—my dooty lies 'ere for the present," answered the patrol, with some hesitation, and a very red face.

"I thought not," said Shilrick, gravely, "sure if there's anny fightin' goin' on 'tis yersilf that thakes care to kape purty clare av it."

With this parting shot at Stalker, Shilrick turned and followed Annesley, who was laughing quietly at his little drummer's audacious speech to the pompous, self-conceited patrol ; as he himself held Stalker in no small contempt, though his rank prevented him from setting the bad example of expressing it.

On the departure of Annesley and Shilrick, the patrol once more got his pluck up ; and thought here was an excellent opportunity of exercising a little petty revenge upon Thalia and Kerry ; such style of vengeance, wherein no danger lurked, being especially dear to the littleness in the mean mind of Jeremiah Stalker, so turning to Kerry, and clearing his throat three times, (a trick of his when about to make a determined attack on any hostile party) he commenced, "Now then, you two good people, ain't you a goin' for to move hon ? You can't stay a-blockin' up this 'ere road no longer."

"Aisy now !" replied Kerry, coolly. "Sure it's not in a hurry ye'd be sayin' move on, to the 'Bould Bhoys,' if ye saw anny av *thim* about the roads. Begorra ! it's manny av the likes av yersilf, I've sane this mornin' promenadin', an' airin' thimselves ; but faith, it's always been in the quietest roads, an' the parts they thought laste likely the 'Bould Bhoys' would be goin'. An' troth, ye all get mighty dull av hearin' whin the alarm bugles is soundin'," he added, scornfully.

"Come now!—none of yer nonsense," cried Stalker. "Just *move hon*, will yer? We knows our dooty, an' we does it our hown way."

"Troth, ye may well say that!" laughed Kerry. "'Safe an' Sure' is yer motto—an' 'tis yersilf knows plinty that *isn't* yer duty annyhow, comin' an' disthurbin' quiet innocint pable."

"Much *you* knows about the dooties of a King's patrol," said Stalker, contemptuously. "But *now* I aint a-goin' for to leave you 'ere neither; so you'll move hon. "Come, young 'ooman!" he added, as he turned to Thalia, and viciously kicked away her basket, scattering all the fresh flowers it had taken the poor girl so long to arrange. "Come now, you be hoff. The young man'll foller fast enough, I warrant."

Kerry's hot blood was now fairly roused, the deep red colour dyed his cheeks, his dark eyes literally blazed with passion. In an instant he had seized the terror-stricken patrol by the collar, and shaken him until that gentleman's official hat had fallen from his head, and lay among poor Thalia's crushed flowers. Here, however, Thalia, fearful of the consequences that might accrue to her lover on account of his violent attack on Stalker, gently ventured to interfere, but it was quite useless; the temper of the O'Tooles had long been proverbial, and in this instance Kerry had been severely tried. Without noticing Thalia's remonstrance, he continued to wave his shillelagh before the blinking, frightened eyes of his victim.

"Begorrah!" he shouted, passionately, into Stalker's ear. "Do that same agin', daur to be oncivil to my colleen, an' bedad I'lli have yez down on the ground ondher your onworthy faat in wan minute, ye ugly, cowardly spalpane! an' make ye think ye'd betther have been doin' yer duty, in goin afther the 'Bould Bhoys.'"

"Oh! don't be mindin' him, Kerry, *avourneen!*" said Thalia, anxiously, laying her hand on Kerry's arm. "Sure, he isn't worth it, 'tis the mane craythur he is enthirely," she added, looking contemptuously at Stalker.

"That's throe for ye, darlin'!" agreed Kerry, with a defiant look in the direction of the patrol, and another threat-

ening wave of his shillelagh which caused his eyes to blink more rapidly than before.

When Stalker regained his breath sufficiently, and had settled his disarranged collar, he slowly walked towards the spot where his hat had fallen ; taking cautious, sidelong glances over his shoulder at the hot-headed, determined young Irishman. Then picking up carefully the official head-gear (the hat that had so often before struck awe into the hearts of evil-doers, and poor little ragged torch-boys of London who were probably as innocent of all harm as Kerry and his fair sweetheart) he dusted it with his coat sleeve, and with great pomposity replaced it on the coarse red head, and once more ventured to address Kerry, thinking to impress the young peasant, and possibly annihilate him with the immense power and magnitude of the law.

"This 'ere will be a case for the *law* to decide ; and you'll find, young man, that once you gets mixed hup, so to speak, with legal proceedings, you won't get heasy hout of 'em, you mark my words. I now harrests you on a charge of a gross and hunmerited hassault with violence and 'malice propense' on a patrol in the 'armless and hinnocent discharge of his dooty on the King's most gracious Majesty's 'ighway. Now, what d'yer say to that," he added, as he gave his hat an additional thump to fix it more firmly on his head, placed his hands behind his back ; then, with his head very much on one side, he leant forward, and, with a most aggravating leer in his pale-coloured and most objectionable eyes, peered insolently into Kerry's face. "What d'yer say to *that*, eh ?" he repeated, insolently.

"That if it's goin' to be a law case, bedad, I'll have me fair share in it too !" replied Kerry, coolly. "An' troth, I'll have yersilf arristed for assaultin' this colleen an' her baxket."

"Henough of this !" cried Stalker, waving his hand majestically. "Henough of this ! You be hoff, I say, both on you !"

"Troth, if ye don't like our company, who is it that's preventin' yersilf from lavin' us, at all at all ?" demanded Kerry. "Och ! the sooner the better," he added, "for begorrah ! it's yer sour face is enough to kape the sun from shinin' ; but

sure it does same a pity to ke kapin' ye here anny longer away from yer duty, lookin' afther the Ribils."

With a look of withering sarcasm at the enraged patrol, Kerry set to work, and, gathering up Thalia's scattered flowers, carefully replaced them in the basket.

"Now then, look sharp!" cried the incorrigible Stalker, "look sharp!"

"Indade thin," answered Thalia, proudly, "we'll just be afther thakin' the thime that's plasins' to us."

"Now!" said Kerry, having finished his occupation of filling Thalia's basket, "sure its oursilves that niver *could* think av bein' so ill-mannered as to go before a gintleman like yersilf, so if ye'll plase to go first and lade the way, it's proud mesilf an' me colleen will be to follow in yer footstheps."

With all Stalker's low cunning, and a certain cleverness in his profession in the matter of hunting down evil doers, he was too thick-headed, and a great deal too thick-skinned to notice the sarcasm in Kerry's voice, or the mischievous sparkle in his eyes. It was without the least suspicion, therefore, of any double-dealing on the part of the young Irishman, that he turned to pursue his way along the path whence he had come with so much difficulty, and he had proceeded some distance before he ventured to let go of a projecting piece of rock, and looked round for his companions, when to his amazement and horror, he found that he was alone on the narrow, rough path, and that Kerry and Thalia were nowhere visible; it was to the astonished patrol as though they had sunk into the earth. At last, cautiously creeping to the edge of the path, and with great fear and trembling, looking over the precipice, he discovered them both.

The fact being, that the moment Stalker's back was turned, Kerry had placed his arm round Thalia, and half-supporting, half-carrying her, they had sprung down the rocks, (an almost impossible, and a perilous, descent to any save such climbers and mountain-bred people, as they were) and had landed safely on the moss-covered path at the water's edge.

"Ah! *you be there*, be you?" shouted Stalker, threateningly, shaking his fist at the miscreants. "I'm a-watching of yer,

don't yer go for to think as 'ow *I've* done with yer yet. I'll remember hall this agin yer," he added, breathlessly, as he looked about wildly, to see if he could find the path by which Kerry and Thalia had descended. "I'll remember ! don't yer think as yer've got the hupper 'and of the law yet, young man."

"Och !" laughed Kerry, looking up at the patrol, and waving his hat to him, much amused at his futile efforts to follow Thalia and himself. "Don't be afther thryin' it, me bhoy ; good pable like yersilf is scarce, an' the path is dangerous, enthirely, it isn't like walkin' up an' down the sthrates av London town on a fine summer's mornin'."

CHAPTER VI.

"In Love, if Love be Love, if Love be ours,
Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal powers,
Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all.

It is the little rift within the lute,
That by-and-bye will make the music mute,
And ever widening soon will silence all."

ALFRED TENNYSON.

The alarm concerning the rising of the Rebels, which was, as stated in our last chapter, the means of recalling Colonel Corrie, Annesley, and Shilrick from the Glen of the Dargle back to Glencree Barracks, had not then resulted in any serious consequences, and most thankful was Eveleen Corrie that the Marines had not yet encountered that party of the Rebels known as the "Bold Boys of Wicklow," and of which her cousin, Morven O'Neill, was the Captain. O'Neill's party had, in reality, gone forth from their stronghold, but simply with the intention of meeting a more powerful body of the Rebels, for the purpose of being inspected by one or more of their Generals and leaders; and having no desire at that time to meet, or to attack any of the soldiers if they could by any means avoid doing so, and on this occasion they had, with considerable dexterity, contrived to accomplish their purpose, the military having, by means of false information, been decoyed in the exact opposite direction to that taken by the Rebel forces, and, before the former were aware of the treachery of their informant, so much time had been lost, that the Rebels, having been duly inspected, were enabled to return singly, and by paths

known only to themselves, to their stronghold in the Wicklow Mountains, or the Devil's Glen, another shelter of the Rebels.

Although there had been frequent skirmishes between small detachments of the troops and the Rebel forces, all more or less serious in their results to both parties, yet the Marines and O'Neill's "Bold Boys" had never yet encountered each other.

On a warm June morning, the soft, hazy sunshine of that month of roses was casting a gentle light over one of the many beautiful roads to be found in the County of Wicklow, the scenery on either side being most wild and picturesque, with its combination of rocks, hills, trees, and water. Well might Sheymus Malloy, the prosperous young farmer, pause for a few minutes, and leaning against an old tree by the roadside, push back his soft, steeple-crowned hat, so that he might the better admire the glorious panorama that Nature here presented to his gaze. Sheymus, who was no mean specimen of his class, possessed a good-looking and very pleasant face, with a well-formed figure, rather above the ordinary height. He was neatly attired in a dark, maroon-coloured cloth coat, made in the style worn by farmers of the better class, in those days, a bright blue Barcelona tied carelessly round his neck, drab waistcoat and breeches, and high black leather gaiters ; he carried in his hand a formidable-looking weapon, that appeared to be intended for the double purpose of riding-whip and shillelagh. At last he left the tree against which he had been leaning, and was slowly proceeding on his way, seemingly buried in deep thought. He was, however, soon roused from his reverie, by the appearance in his path, at a short distance, of Thalia Coghlan. The hood of her red cloak had fallen back, and as she approached Sheymus, a ray of sunshine fell full upon her, casting a golden glory o'er her dark auburn hair, and adding a rare brilliancy to her dreamy grey eyes. At first she did not notice Sheymus Malloy, being occupied in carefully arranging the contents of the basket she carried on her arm, fragrant with its freight of sweet June wild-flowers.

"Sure there's Thalia Coghlan!—an' comin' this way, too!" exclaimed Sheymus, joyfully, as he hastened to meet

her. "Oh, the dear colleen! troth it's hersilf is beautiful enthirely; sure Nature niver made another colleen like Thalia, an' maybes it's lucky," he added, with a deep sigh, "for there's been plinty av broken hearts, an' heads, about *her* annyhow. Oh! wirra, wirra, it's three thimes the colleen has refused mesilf, an' yet here I'm goin' to thry agin, for sure there's nothin' to be had in this world that's worth havin' widout thryin' for it. Maybes, if I kape on axin', she'll get bothered enthirely, an' consint in the ind. If it wasn't for that thafe av the world, Kerry O'Toole, I belave the colleen would like mesilf. But, bedad! I'll thry wanst moor, an' sure if I don't succade it'll not be for want av axin'."

It was well for the peace of mind of Sheymus, that he did not observe Thalia's start of annoyance when she saw who was approaching her, nor the manner in which she paused irresolute, for an instant, and evidently hesitating as to whether she should turn back, or still continue on her way; but 'tis said that, "the woman who hesitates is lost," and before Thalia could come to any satisfactory decision, Sheymus Malloy was at her side.

How often the fate of our future lives is decided by the veriest trifles! How often the great turning-point comes, and we never know it! So we, in our blindness, miss the tide that might have led us onward, and upward, to fortune and happiness in this world and in the great hereafter, and are thus left sad and alone, on the desolate shore, to mourn over lost opportunities and buried hopes.

Hitherto, all things had gone well and smoothly with regard to the love affairs of Thalia Coghlan and Kerry O'Toole, their poverty being the one and the only drawback; but neither of these young lovers were at all mercenary, and they were not in the least disposed to make themselves miserable on that account, or to allow such a trifling, and such a very sublunary matter as the want of money to part them.

Thalia and Kerry had by this time fully arranged matters between themselves. Thalia's old grandmother had not been proof against the earnest pleading, and the blarney of Kerry, and possibly the boy's handsome face may have had

something to do with his success; be that as it may, he always did manage to gain his point with women, and in this instance he came off, as usual, victorious. It was therefore settled that he and Thalia were to be married in a few weeks. But alas! for human hopes and plans, Fate, as if grudging even the few innocent pleasures that had fallen to the lot of the poor flower girl, was already following her with relentless speed to steal from her poor trusting heart the sunshine of love and happiness, to strew her life's path with the thorns and briars of sorrow, trouble, and despair.

Had Thalia, when she noticed Sheymus Malloy coming towards her, obeyed her first instinct, and turned in another direction, away from him; had she by any means shown the young farmer that she did not wish to meet him, Sheymus was too proud to have followed her. Or had he not lingered so long on his way he would not have met Thalia, and thus would more than one person in this story have been spared from the dire misfortunes and disasters that befell them.

"Thalia! Thalia *cora machree*!" said Sheymus, tenderly, as he stood beside her.

"Sure, Sheymus, is it yersilf?" she said, keeping her eyes fixed on the ground. "The top av the mornin' to ye!" Then turning her face away from him, she murmured, "Sure I wish I hadn't met the bhoys, it's always the same ould story wid him."

"Troth I'm glad to mate ye, Thalia! Maybes—maybes," continued Sheymus, hesitating, "it's yersilf that'll listhen to me *this* thime annyhow, whin ye know the harm ye've been doin'."

"I belave it's comin' agin," sighed Thalia, to herself; then turning to Sheymus, she said, "harm is it, an' what harm have I been doin' to yersilf?"

"Sure, didn't ye refuse me throe honest love?" he asked, "an' isn't that enough harm to do anny bhoys? Oh, *colleen machree*! if ye'd only change yer mind, if ye'd only think it over agin, darlin'."

"I thought so!" murmured Thalia, sighing; "but maybes it aises the bhoys' mind to be spakin' av it."

"Sure, I'm well off, Thalia," he continued, "a tenant av

his honour, Lord Powerscourt's, wid a fine farm, an' a nate pace av land av me own, enthirely."

"Oh, Sheymus!" replied Thalia, "d'ye think that a fine farm an' a nate pace av land would buy *my* heart? Ah! no, no, not a hundred farms, nor all ould Ireland put together, would do it."

"But think, Thalia darlin'," he pleaded, "how I love yer-silf; the very sight av ye fills me heart wid happiness. Sure I'd go through anny thrials an' dhangers if I could only win yer love."

"Oh!" said Thalia, sorrowfully, "why will ye be axin me that agin, Sheymus? Isn't it three thimes I've tould ye that it couldn't be."

"That's throe for ye," answered Sheymus, "but maybes the fourth time might bring the good luck wid it; sure ye'll be changin' yer mind, *avourneen*?" he asked, coaxingly.

"No, Sheymus, niver," she replied, kindly, but firmly.

"Maybes it's despisin' my love ye are, Thalia?"

"Ah, no," she answered, "I'd niver do that; no throe woman should iver despise the faithful, honest love av *anny* man, an' sure 'tis the respect I have for yersilf, Sheymus, an' I know well there's many a colleen that would be proud to have yer love."

"Thalia *gramachree*!" he said, sorrowfully, "I'll never love another colleen as long as I live; but sure, darlin', ye'll tell me, is it another bhoy that has won yer heart? Is it—is it Kerry O'Toole?"

"Yes, it *is* Kerry O'Toole," she answered, softly. "An' now, Sheymus, whin ye know all, sure, ye'll thry an' forgit mesilf. Promise me that ye'll do this?" she pleaded, earnestly, laying her hand on his arm.

"Forgit ye, is it?" looking down upon her, sadly. "Forgit the only colleen I'll ever care for? Oh! Thalia, Thalia *ma'avourneen*! 'tis the sad heart ye've given mesilf this mornin'."

"But ye'll thry to do it, Sheymus? Sure, I know ye will whin I ax ye. 'Tis unhappy I'd be to see the cloud av sorrow on yer brow, an' to think 'twas mesilf brought it there."

For some moments Sheymus remained silent; there was

something he wished to ask Thalia, but found a difficulty in putting his request into words.

Poor Sheymus Malloy had one great weakness ; a weakness, however, that is shared by many a brave man and woman, he had an intense horror of ridicule ; he would bravely face a whole regiment of soldiers, he would go through any dangers on land or sea, with the most praiseworthy courage, but would shrink with the keenest sensitiveness from a jeering laugh or a sneer ; and the many jokes that had been passed at his expense, with regard to his unsuccessful wooing, had troubled the usually stout-hearted young farmer considerably, for these affairs are well known, and talked over, alike by friends and foes, long before the principal actors in the life's drama are aware that their neighbours know, or have seen what is being enacted.

"Thalia *asthore* !" said Sheymus, earnestly, taking her hands in his, "there's wan thing I want ye to promise, an' that is to tell no wan what has passed betwane us ; sure it isn't that I mind thim knowin' me love for yersilf, but d'ye see," he added, shyly, the hot colour mounting to his sensitive face, "d'ye see, if the bhoys heard I'd been axin' yersilf agin, an'—an'—"

"I know what ye mane, Sheymus," said Thalia, kindly, "but ye can thrust to me, I'll niver spake a word av it to anny wan, an' sure all I'll be wishin' for, is to see yersilf lookin' bright an' happy agin. Now," she added, gently, "I must be lavin' ye, for it's gettin' late, an' 'tis the long road I have to go."

"Och ! bad luck to me if I let ye go yer lone," he cried, as he tried to take the basket from her, intending to carry it himself.

"No, no !" exclaimed Thalia, hastily. "Sure ye musn't be afther comin' wid me, Sheymus."

"An' why, Thalia ?" he asked, looking rather hurt. "Is it ashamed av me company that ye are ?"

"Oh no, Sheymus !" she replied. "But—but, sure I'd rayther go me lone, an' I thank ye for yer offer, but it'll be betther for us to part here."

"Nonsense, Thalia ! I'm comin' to help ye along wid yer load," said Sheymus, determinedly, as he once more laid his hand on the basket.

"Well!" said Thalia, at last yielding, though most unwillingly, and allowing him to take the basket. "There, if it's to give ye anny pleasure, ye can carry it for this wanst."

"Pleasure, is it!" exclaimed Sheymus, earnestly. "Oh! Thalia, jewel av me heart! Sure I wish I could thake up the pace of ground ye're standin' on this minute, to save ye the throuble av walkin' enthirely."

Had Thalia only looked round for a moment in the opposite direction to that in which she was going, accompanied by Sheymus Malloy, she might have saved herself much misery in the future, but, being in a thoughtful mood, she proceeded on her way without turning to the right or the left, or even giving one backward glance before starting.

Sheymus was too much engaged in thinking of the girl beside him, to notice their surroundings; neither, therefore, observed the two pedestrians who were coming slowly towards them, but who, instead of continuing their course along the same road, and following in the footsteps of Sheymus and Thalia, which it had, at first, evidently been their intention of doing, they paused suddenly in the centre of the road, and stood watching the young farmer and his companion.

Very different were the feelings with which Kerry O'Toole and Thaddeus Magin witnessed the latter part of the interview between Sheymus and Thalia.

Kerry's dark face was stormy with fierce passion and jealousy, and there was an ominous gleam in his eyes that boded ill for the young farmer when next he should encounter Thalia's indignant lover.

The expression on the face of Thaddeus Magin—the Yankee-Irishman, as he was called—was one of the most malicious triumph, and it was in no spirit of friendship, or with a desire to give Kerry a kindly warning, that he now stood beside him, and with a sneer that could scarcely have been surpassed by Mephistopheles himself, pointed towards the receding figures, and, by his very silence, tried the more effectually to impress upon Kerry the fact that those whom they were watching were lovers.

Magin had long used every effort, though hitherto without success, to part Thalia and Kerry, and to raise up discord

and dissension between them. He hated both with an intense and bitter hatred, and being possessed of a diabolical nature that was ever ready to harbour every evil thought and feeling, he was determined on seeking the first opportunity of revenging himself on the poor flower-girl, because she had refused to listen to his overtures of love when he first arrived from America, and upon the young Irishman for being a rival in her affections. Now, he thought, delightedly, when he was able to attract Kerry's notice, and actually show proof of the friendship between Sheymus and Thalia, was an opportunity at least of sowing the first seeds of doubt in Kerry's heart—a doubt that he well knew would swiftly grow and flourish in the warm, generous, but, unfortunately, most jealous nature of O'Toole.

Magin was a man of striking, but exceedingly unpleasant, appearance, rather above the ordinary height in stature, he was thin and lanky in form, yet wiry, and of considerable strength and power. His skin was yellow as the most ancient of parchment ; his eyes, in which there always gleamed a wicked, evil light, were shaded by lids that drooped in a sinister manner, at times leaving only the one corner of each baneful eye exposed to view, out of which he "took stock," as he expressed it, of anyone who might be his companion at the time. A long, thin nose, with an inclination to point outwards, considerably aided the very unpleasant mouth and receding chin, in giving the appearance of a perpetual sneer to this unprepossessing face ; while a small, thin tuft of coarse hair, beneath the lower lip, in no way lessened the disagreeable effect. A most aggressive manner combined with a general air of treachery and deceit, which seemed to show itself in every feature, in every action of the man, might surely have warned, even the most casual observer of human nature, to put no faith in him. And yet, as, unfortunately, is too often the case, there are many who go on, day after day, trusting such men, and, if not entirely believing in them, yet are apparently utterly unable to shake themselves free of the toils that are cast about their unwary feet, and, if their lives are spared, they awake when too late, only to find that their hopes are wrecked, their peace and happiness gone for ever. Such could not fail to be the fate

of those who put any faith in, or allowed themselves to be influenced, by the man, Thaddeus Magin, who, being the descendant of a mixed race, possessed, as it frequently happens, the very worst qualities of both, without any of the redeeming points of either.

In attire, he presented a strange contrast to Kerry O'Toole. A rough, dark-blue frieze jacket was worn open in front, displaying a red and white striped shirt, which was confined at the waist by a heavy-looking leather belt, to which were attached a large bowie knife and a pistol. He wore black leather gaiters, a high, white straw hat, with a broad brim, and a red and white striped band round the crown; he was farther adorned by a gorgeous yellow neckerchief tied loosely about his throat; and he carried in his hand a thick, short stick or club, with which it was his custom occasionally to emphasize his words on the back or the shoulders of the unfortunate person with whom he might be conversing, bringing down this formidable weapon with a sudden, quick, sharp movement, and a dexterous flourish that somehow seemed to allow his victim neither the time nor the chance to avoid it.

It was Magin who at last broke the silence that had existed between himself and Kerry, while with breathless interest they had watched the proceedings of Sheymus and Thalia. The wily Yankee, thinking that the said silence had lasted long enough to have had due effect upon Kerry; and also having just disposed of the last remnant of an immense piece of tobacco with which his capacious mouth had been filled, and which he had been chewing for some minutes with great zest.

"Now then, mister!" he commenced, with a strong nasal twang, as he again pointed significantly in the direction in which Thalia and Sheymus were disappearing, "I guess yer'll be convinced *now*!" he continued, triumphantly, and at the same time bringing his club-stick smartly down on Kerry's shoulder. "There they go! quite pleased with each other. This 'ere is the *fourth* time I've had the satisfaction of p'inting them out to yer, an' always together, loving and confidential."

"Lave me! lave me, I tell ye!" cried Kerry, passionately.

"'Tis hatin' the very sight av yersilf, I am, when ye'd be thryin' to put it into me heart to doubt my own thrue colleen."

"Wa'al now, that airn't very polite of yer, mister!" said Magin, "after all the trouble I've taken to convince yer of how false the gal is."

"She's *not* false!" cried Kerry, indignantly. "Sure, I'll niver belave it, at all, at all. An what is it *ye* have agin the poor colleen, that ye'd be thryin' to harm her that way? Is it bekase she wouldn't give ye her love, that ye're so bitter an' angry wid her enthirely?"

"Angry with her, mister!" exclaimed the Yankee, scornfully. "No, no! *that* airn't in my line, I calc'late that would be too mild a feelin' for *me*. I *hate* her," he continued, fiercely. "I hate her! But I guess she'll repent some day, never fear—that there gal will live to be tarnation sorry that she refused *me*, the *second in command* of the 'Bold Boys.' Ay!" he added, in a low tone, "an' I reckon the *first* in command very soon, or my name's not Thaddeus Magin." Then turning again to Kerry, and once more emphasizing his words in his usual style, "*I'll hev my revenge yet!*"

"Revinge!" cried Kerry, contemptuously, "sure 'tis mighty brave to spake av revinge on a poor colleen, bekase she couldn't give yez the love ye axed for."

"Wa'al!" answered Magin, sneeringly, "an' mayhap, *I'm* not the only one she's refused. I calc'late yer'll be thrown overboard yerself next, mister, to make way for Sheymus Malloy, he's a spry young farmer, an' well off, too," continued the Yankee, tauntingly, peeping out of the corners of his eyes to see the effect of his words upon his companion. "*He's* one of my Lord Powerscourt's favourite tenants, *you* air only a poor man, with a miserable old hovel of a shanty, with only half a roof to it, an' that I guess'll come tumbling down about yer ears some fine night; the only thing to recommend it is, that yer've always plenty of fresh air to keep the place healthy an' wholesome, specially of a cool, winter day, when the wind is whistlin' over the mountains, givin' yer a song through yer door as it passes, and the rain pourin' in 'twixt the rafters,

to keep the cabin always fresh and clean without the trouble of usin' soap an' water. I guess that's a pleasant, lively pictur for any gal, eh mister? An' as for the little strip of bog land yer've got, why I reckon the very varmin goes away to where there's better feedin',—cussed fools they'd be if they didn't."

"I can't help the misfortunes that comes to me," said Kerry, despairingly. "Sure, I do all I can for the land, an' 'tis purty soon I'd have the shanty nate an' illgiant, but the sorra thing I done for it yet widout the new English agint raisin' the rint on me whiniver he sees anny improvements about the place, ontill there's niver a *cronagh bawn* left mesilf to carry on the repairs, an' 'tis all through that thavin' blackguard av an agint," he continued, passionately. "Bad luck to him! I belave I'll soon have to lave the ould shanty. Sorra thing ilse'll be left for mesilf to do, onless to lie down an' die in the place that for moor nor two hundred years has been the home av me forefathers, an' the property av the ould landlord who was so dear to us all—an' now he's far away, an' 'tis the mane vagabond has charge of his lands—oh! why did he lave us? Sure, I'd go at wanst—now—an' sake me fortune in a far-off land, for 'tis weary av the caseless struggle I am—if it wasn't that me heart clings to the ould soil."

"Why certainly! I guess that's so!" answered Magin, with a smile of contempt at his companion. "But heven't I told yer often enough, that there's a remedy for all this, eh? Now if yer'll only be guided by *me*, and join *us*, to fight for liberty and equality, we'll have a fine division of all these 'ere lands. I calc'late we'll have no landlords; why should we? We can do well enough without them, we'll be all equal," concluded the Yankee, triumphantly, and again bringing down his club upon the shoulders of Kerry.

"And dy'e think ye can do it?" asked Kerry, eagerly, *his* mind being much too intent, and fixed on his own side of the land question, to notice the termination of Magin's speech.

"D'y'e think ye can do it?" he repeated, "Oh! if ye could only make way for the ould landlords, an' our own ould nobility comin' bhack to us agin, sure it would be worth fightin' for enthirely; it's mighty little they throubled us about rints whin they sane we couldn't pay; but if we only

had *thim* bhack agin, sure it's workin' our hands off we'd be to kape thim up in proper dacent sthyle."

"The old landlords!—the old nobility! I guess there'll be two to that arrangement, my boy," murmured Magin to himself; then turning scornfully upon Kerry, he exclaimed, "Would yer? Then ye're the more fools! What do yer want with *them* back agin, eh? Didn't they have every luxury and pleasure, while *you*, the *tenants*, had nothing but poverty an' miserable old cabins. No, no, mister! I guess we'll have a different sort of arrangement *this* time."

"But sure that isn't what we're afther, 'tis the long laases *we* want, an' some consitheration for anny improvements we'd be makin', an' not to have the rint raised on us ache time we'd thry to make our homes a thrifle moor illigant and comfortable, ontill the rint grows far more than the rale value av the land we're payin' for; the *ould* landlords didn't do that, they'd always the kind word for us, and," added Kerry, with a sigh, "sure they kept up the honour av the *ould* sthock, an' there was niver annythin' but open house thin, an' a grand galore, an' lashins av iverythin' from the sthables to the illigant apartments inside."

"Wa'al!" said Magin, resignedly crossing his arms, "since I hev been in this country, I guess I *hev* met a tar-nation lot of fools, but you certainly air the very biggest of them."

"Then if ye think so little av us, why is it ye sthay here, at all, at all?" asked Kerry, indignantly.

"Ah! that's because the generosity of my natur' prevents me from leaving a country in distress, when I consider that *I* may be the mainspring of that country, mister! an' the one to pull her through her troubles. Yes, I calc'late we're arranging everything well, we'll soon fix old Ireland all square, but yer'll hev to exert yerselves an' let England see yer airn't to be trampled on. The days air comin' when every man of yer'll get whatever yer want, an' there'll be nothing but peace and joy, happiness and prosperity, all over Ireland. You hev just get to fight for yer country like men, and show England how yer can take the upper hand of her."

Poor Kerry, though naturally bright, quick-witted and

intelligent, was still somewhat hazy as to Magin's plans, and how they were to benefit himself and his countrymen; and he, like many others of his class, who had even in a moment of enthusiasm taken the oath and joined the cause, had but a faint glimmering notion of what they themselves wanted personally, and the good that they hoped might accrue to their unfortunate country from the movement. Hundreds, too, of the poor and the ignorant were led on by such men as Thaddeus Magin, who were seeking only their own self-advancement, or gathering in as much money as possible from poor creatures who were almost starving, but ready to give their all to the cause, which they were made to believe was to be the salvation of their country, and the means of raising each one of them from poverty, to wealth and prosperity. Little they thought, these poor trusting ones, that the money, which had been so difficult for many of them to obtain, in many instances never left the possession of the half-foreign delegates who professed to be collecting it for the "*great cause*," and some of whom, apart from feelings of self-interest, were seeking to rouse the Irish to rebellion, and even assisting them with funds for the sole purpose of proving an annoyance to England.

Kerry remained for some moments in deep thought before he replied to the Yankee's last words to him; at last he spoke, shaking his head gravely. "Ye'll niver, niver manage it, sure there isn't bhoys enough to go aginst England. It's the poor down-throdden counthry ours is, an there's no wan to help us, at all, at all."

"Wa'al! if yer airn't enough to try the greatest saint that ever walked. Hevn't I told yer that ye're to hev help from France, and I calc'late from America too, eh?—come now, mister, won't yer consent to join us?"

"Niver!" replied Kerry, determinedly. "Ah!" he exclaimed suddenly, something in the tone, the words, or the sinister expression on the face of the man before him, causing the doubt, for the first time, to dawn upon his mind, of Magin's good faith, and real intentions and motives. "Sure 'tis blind I must have been, but I see what ye're afther *now*. It's a double game ye're playin', annyhow, Thaddeus Magin. 'Tis

makin' the other bhoys belave that it's fightin' for the liberty av *our* counthry ye'd be, an' troth it would be mighty plasin' to have a King av our own, an' not be throdden ondher foot by foreign powers, an' to have our own ould landlords back agin, and a thaste av 'Home Rule' an' Irish Indipindince an' all thim fine things the gintlemin in Parl'mint does be always spakin' about ; but," he added, significantly, his dark eyes looking steadfastly and searchingly into Magin's startled face, "*that's* not what *you're* afther, me bhoys !"

For an instant only, the incorrigible Yankee was taken aback at Kerry's sudden insight into his character, and the true nature of his schemes. He was like all men of his type, an arrant coward at heart, and his startled look, shrinking movement, and evident fear, were not lost upon the young Irishman, who determined, for the future (as he expressed it), to "kape an eye on Magin," and, if necessary, to warn others to have a care how they put too much faith in him.

Magin soon recovered his former audacity, however, and once more returned to the subject of Sheymus and Thalia.

"Wa'al ! I guess yer'd better join the cause, mister, it'll help to take yer mind off that faithless gal. I'd advise yer to make tracks after her and her spry new lover as sharp as possible now, an' watch where they go and what they do."

"Sure, I'd niver be so mane as to watch her that way," replied Kerry, indignantly. "An' she's *not* faithless, I tell ye. I'll niver belave that av her."

"An' why does the gal meet Sheymus Malloy so often then, eh ? An' why does he always wait for her such a tarnation long time, lurkin' about the locality where he thinks she'll be comin' ? I guess yer can't make no answer to that, mister !" said Magin, with a sneer.

"If I ax her, she'll tell me, an' ready an willin'," answered Kerry. "Sure, I don't nade to be goin' snakin' afther the colleen, an' watchin' her ; though, like enough, it's what *you* would do," he added, contemptuously.

"I guess yer'd better ask her then," said Magin ; "I tell yer again, the gal will soon throw *you* overboard."

"It isn't thrue, what ye're sayin'," cried Kerry, angrily.

"Sure, it's yersilf *knows* that it isn't throe. I'll never belave it! Sure, 'tis this very avenin' I'll spake to her. I was to mate her on the ould bridge as she came from Bray, to walk home wid her, for 'tis the lonesome road to her grandmother's shanty."

"All right, mister," answered Magin, scornfully, "all right! I guess yer'll be no wiser then than yer were before. That there gal will tell yer the truth or not, just as she pleases. It'll be easy enough to make a fool of *you*, when you air so precious deep in love with the gal, I reckon yer'll not get much satisfaction out of *her*. But, take your own way! Take your own way!" he added, tauntingly, as having fairly instilled the poison of doubt and jealousy into the faithful, loving heart of Kerry O'Toole, he turned and left him, pausing once to look back with a diabolical expression on his countenance, a lurid fire gleaming out of the corners of his half-closed eyes as he triumphantly watched the effect of his words upon his victim.

"*Thalia* false!" Kerry murmured, sorrowfully. "False! an' for Gould! Oh, sure I'll niver belave it! Oh, *Thalia cora machree*! may the blight niver fall on yersilf, as ye'll make it to fall on me if ye forsake me. But I'll ax ye, darlin', this very night on the ould bridge, wid the shine av the moon fallin' full on yer beautiful face, that I may see if 'tis the light av love an' truth that's in yer eyes. I'll ax ye, an' oh, *Thalia mavourneen, mavourneen*! sure 'tis yersilf that's niver decaved me, niver spoken an ontruth before, an' ye'll tell me all an' explain iverythin' to mesilf enthirely, or,"—here there was a sudden change in Kerry's manner, as with a heightened colour in his face, and eyes blazing with passion, he concluded determinedly, "if not—*oh! colleen machree*!—much as I love ye—we'll part—ay, begorrah! we'll part—niver to mate agin in this world, onless as sthrangers."

CHAPTER VII.

" Oh ! years have passed o'er me since last time we met,
Yet, lived I a thousand, I could not forget
The true hearts that loved me, the bright eyes that shone
Like stars in the heaven of days that are gone.
Oh ! cuishla machree ! my heart beats for thee,
Erin, Erin, my heart beats for thee."

CHARLES JEFFREYS.

Nearly two months before the meeting between Thalia Coghlan and Sheymus Malloy, recorded in our last chapter, Mrs. Kinahan, the comely landlady of the "Shamrock," as well as the frequenters of that roadside house of entertainment, and the general inhabitants of the neighbourhood, were somewhat surprised, one fine day, by the sudden appearance of their old friend, Owen Maguire, in their midst, after a lengthened absence in foreign parts with his master, Morven O'Neill ; still more astonished were all, when after a mysterious interview with Mrs. Kinahan, Owen once more departed for a few days, but only to re-appear again, and this time he was not alone, his companion being a young French girl, with an exceedingly beautiful face, and a graceful and refined demeanour, who was attired somewhat in the style of a French soubrette, and whose pleasant, winning manner, made her at once a favourite with all with whom she chanced to come in contact.

It was understood that the young foreigner was a distant relation to Mrs. Kinahan, but, having been left an orphan, and without any near relatives in France, she had been sent over to Ireland, by some friends, and placed under the motherly care of the widow.

Such was Mrs. Kinahan's story, and it was not contra-

dicted by the discreet Owen ; but it cannot be said, however, that the widow's version was accepted in the neighbourhood, without considerable doubt, much dissension, gossip, and general wonderment. Even that most interesting and useful member of society, the "oldest inhabitant," when applied to, could not, when taxing his memory to the very utmost, recollect any of Mrs. Kinahan's own, or her husband's, family having gone to foreign parts, nor had he ever heard of intermarriages with any but their own country-people. The most inquisitive of friends and acquaintances, however, being able to gain no farther information from either Mrs. Kinahan or Owen Maguire, the arrival of the fair foreigner proved a nine-days' wonder, and then all seemed to settle down once more, resigned to the hopelessness of being able to elucidate the mystery, and things went on as before in the "Shamrock" and the neighbourhood, as if nought had occurred to disturb the usual course of events. Certain it was that the guest received the warmest of welcomes from Mrs. Kinahan, and her daughter Anty, but she was not often seen by the general frequenters of the inn, as she kept principally to her own apartment, or the landlady's private parlour. At first on her arrival, she had been accustomed to enjoy more freedom, and would sometimes, in passing, speak a few words in her broken English, to any of the peasantry who were known to her, seeming always to take an especially keen interest in those of Mrs. Kinahan's guests who were devoting themselves to the "*great cause*." From all she had received the greatest respect, for, though courteous and gentle to everyone, there was yet that nameless something about her—a certain pride and dignity, which warned them that she was not to be trifled with, and prevented any who were disposed to be forward, from encroaching on her kindness, or taking undue liberties on account of her friendliness.

There was one man, however, who went constantly to the inn, of whom she had an instinctive horror, and that man was the Yankee, Thaddeus Magin. He had long suspected that there was some important secret connected with Mrs. Kinahan's foreign relative, and he had determined on using every means to discover it, in the hope that eventually it

might prove useful to him. Meanwhile, having found that his love suit with Thalia Coghlan had not proved satisfactory, he turned his attention to the pretty French girl, and endeavoured on every possible opportunity to let the object of his amorous designs see that he condescended to look upon her with favourable eyes. At last arrived, what he thought to be, an excellent time in which to declare his intentions towards the young foreigner. She was seated one day, in a rustic arbour in the little garden of the inn, engaged with some embroidery work ; she was quite alone, Anty Kinahan having just left her, to attend to some household employment.

Magin entered the arbour so stealthily that the girl, whose thought were anxious and very far away at that moment, did not notice his approach, until the Yankee's arm was over her shoulders, and his treacherous, evil eyes were peering into her own, while he made fierce and determined love to her. The startled girl rose hurriedly in her terror, and tried to pass Magin, but in this she would probably not have succeeded had it not been for Mrs. Kinahan, who, from an upper window of the inn, chanced to see what was going on in the arbour, and, running out quickly, went behind Magin, and administered such a smart boxing on both that gentleman's ears, accompanied by so furious a shower of invectives, that the Yankee was glad to slink away as soon as possible, and make tracks in the opposite direction ; not, however, without favouring the widow and her charge with a most vindictive glance out of the corners of his eyes, now glistening with the lurid light of passion, and calling to her, when at a tolerably safe distance :

“ I guess yer *nameless* foreign gal will be glad enough, some day, to be Mrs. Thaddeus Magin.”

After this occurrence, Mrs. Kinahan's guest was never to be seen alone, beyond the threshold of the inn. Magin came and went as usual ; it did not suit him to quarrel with the widow, nor was it of advantage to her to continue at enmity with any of the frequenters of her hostelry, and still less was she disposed to do so with one who belonged to the detachment of “ Bold Boys,” under the command of her favourite, Morven O'Neill. Therefore, the Yankee's unfortunate visit

to the harbour, and the unsuccessful termination to his latest love affair was never again alluded to between them.

Two or three weeks after, however, and on the afternoon of the day when Magin had contrived to arouse a feeling of doubt in the mind of Kerry O'Toole with regard to Thalia Coghlan, the young French girl was seated near the open latticed window of a room in the "Shamrock."

It was a long apartment, uncarpeted, and sparsely furnished, but it was always kept scrupulously clean and fresh, and was generally used as a public room, in which were held political and other meetings, and where the farmers of the neighbourhood were wont to assemble to talk over agricultural affairs and the ever-engrossing subject of the land question.

A long table occupied the centre of the room, a low wooden settle was placed on one side of the wide fireplace, in front of which lay a large sheepskin rug, with a crimson border; opposite to the settle was a large and very ancient-looking easy-chair, with crimson cushions, which was generally used when any of "the quality" honoured the inn with a visit. On each side of the window stood a curious cupboard or cabinet of dark-coloured carved wood, which had formerly adorned the home of the O'Neills, and on the top of these cabinets were ranged several china bowls, plates, and cups; all old treasures that were much prized by the widow Kinahan. Over the high mantelshelf were suspended the gun, and the hunting whip and horn, that had been used by the late Mike Kinahan, when in his youth, and at the time when he was "whipper-in" in the service of the O'Neills. His old violin, carefully preserved, in another part of the room, showed that the young huntsman had been musical as well as sporting in his tastes; and in truth there were many among the oldest of Mr. Kinahan's guests who could tell of the jovial evenings they had spent at the "Shamrock," when they were entertained with stirring stories of the hunting field, and "the rale ould sthock," varied by tunes on the fiddle, to the lively strains of which the boys and the colleens had often "taken the flure," in the good old days that were gone.

The walls of the apartment were farther decorated by

some rough sketches, the early productions of Morven O'Neill, and which had been presented with great pride to his old nurse ; for the most part they represented favourite Irish patriots. There were also a few cruder, and highly coloured, specimens of Shilrick O'Toole's artistic talent, illustrative of military exploits, and in each of which appeared one, or a couple of British soldiers, engaged in a desperate hand to hand fight with some two or three dozen foreigners, who were evidently, despite the force of overpowering numbers, getting the worst of it, those in the foreground being apparently knocked over like nine-pins before the attack of their gallant and fearless opponents, while the remainder were in full retreat.

On the side of the room, opposite the fireplace, a large placard was nailed against the wall. Scattered about were several wooden chairs and stools, which, together with a small table at the window, on which stood a blue china bowl filled with flowers, and a basket containing embroidery silks of various bright hues, completed the furniture of what was certainly the most pleasant and inviting room in the little roadside hostelry, on that warm June afternoon, from its size, and the fresh, cool breeze that was wafted in through the wide-latticed window, and which blew straight from the mountains.

So thought the fair foreigner, as she sat on the low window seat, enjoying the perfume of the roses which grew in profusion in Mrs. Kinahan's little garden, and gazing with admiration at the glorious view, across a wild track of moorland and water, of the distant purple mountains, with the great Sugar Loaf, in its solemn grandeur, towering above all.

She had been employed on a piece of embroidery work, which was now completed, and lay on the seat beside her. This room was a favourite of hers, because, from its window, she could see a winding road in the distance leading to the mountains, and now her attention was divided between watching that road with an eager light in her eyes, as if in expectation of the appearance of one in whom she felt a loving interest, and glancing anxiously, from time to time, at the large placard on the wall of the room. Beside her stood

Anty Kinahan, also an earnest watcher, for she too expected and hoped for a sight of one who was dear to her. The two girls made a bright picture in the window recess of the sombre old room.

No doubt the reader has already guessed that the young French girl was none other than Estelle, the fair bride of Morven O'Neill.

As yet, however, her identity was kept a profound secret, save to a few well-tried and trusted friends, it being deemed advisable, both for the safety of Estelle and her husband, that her relationship to the young Rebel Chief should, for a certain time at least, remain unknown. On this account, therefore, as well as with a view of still sustaining her character as Mrs. Kinahan's relation from France, she continued to wear the attire of a Parisian soubrette. Her short skirt was of soft cashmere, and of an exquisite shade of light green (the colour chosen in compliment to O'Neill's country) the upper skirt, which was looped up with knots of green ribbon, and the high square-cut bodice were composed of a light and delicately flowered cashmere. A chemisette of soft muslin, and folds of the same on the elbow sleeves, a small muslin apron with pockets and knots of green ribbon, long white mittens, bands of black velvet round the neck, on the arms, and the pretty Normandy cap of white muslin, which rested so charmingly on the golden locks, gathered in a cluster beneath it. The short skirt displayed stockings of the same hue, and the daintiest of black, high-heeled shoes, adorned with silver buckles.

Such was the costume which had been worn by Estelle, from the time she left her own country, and it is needless to say that it became her well. On the present occasion, the refined delicacy of her beauty, and the soft shade of her dress, contrasted pleasantly with the more florid colouring, and the rustic charms of pretty, dark-eyed Anty Kinahan, who now stood beside her, sharing her expectations and her anxiety, for Anty's lover was the faithful follower of Morven O'Neill through all the hardships, perils, and hairbreadth escapes of his precarious life. "There, Anty!" said Estelle, at last turning from the window, and holding up for her companion's inspection, the embroidered silk scarf which had been

lying beside her. "See, my friend, it is finished, de white silk scarf for my love. Do you like it? I have embroidered it wid de shamrocks, dat *he* does love so well; dey are here twined in one garland round de harp of your country. Is de pattern pretty, do you think, Anty, de green an' de gold embroidery on de white silk?"

"Oh, me lady!" replied Anty, admiringly. "Sure, I've niver sane a purtier pace av work, 'tis illegant enthirely! Long may Misther O'Neill live to wear it!"

"Indeed, indeed I do hope dat it will please him. Ah!" cried Estelle, starting on hearing a knock at the door. "But listen, Anty, who is dat?—Oh, I should not be here!"

The knock was followed by a low, peculiar whistle, which brought a quick blush and a happy smile to Anty's face. "Sure, me lady," she said, brightly, "ye naden't fear at all, at all, 'tis his honour's own sarvant, Owen Maguire."

"Ah! How glad I am for dat!" replied Estelle, joyfully. "*Now* I shall hear news of my Morven. Go, Anty! if you please and tell Owen dat I do await him here wid one *great* impatience."

"Yes, me lady!" answered Anty, departing on her errand with alacrity. In a few minutes she returned, followed by Owen Maguire, who, taking off his hat, respectfully approached Estelle.

"Well, Owen! I hope I do see you well. Bring you good news of your master to me dis day?" asked Estelle, anxiously.

"It's well an' hearty I am, an' I thank ye, me lady!" he answered, shyly, and turning his hat round in his hands. "An' as to me masther! sure 'tis the best av news I bring an' what'll be most plasins' to yer ladyship."

"Ah!" cried Estelle, eagerly, "I pray you, tell it to me quickly, my good Owen! Did he send any message for me?"

"Sorra word, ma'am, by raison that his honour was comin' here himself—an' faith I thought to find he'd arrived before me; as I'd a thrifle av a message to take to Miles Mulvany, beyant here," answered Owen.

"Then I shall see him soon, now!" said Estelle, joyfully. "My own Morven! But, Owen," she continued, turning

anxiously to him, and pointing to the placard on the wall, "I did want to ask you about de paper dere, it is offering a great reward for some one. Who is it? Who is dis *Monsieur Chiny*? Is he among de men your master commands? Oh! tell me—is dere danger for my husband?"

On looking at that side of the room now indicated by Estelle, Owen, for the first time, noticed the placard—he started, gazed anxiously at it for a moment, then going nearer, he slowly read the printed words.

"Anty!" he said, angrily, but in a low voice, so that Estelle should not hear him, "why is it yer mother let *that* be put up here?"

"Sure we couldn't help it, Owen," she replied, in the same low tones. "If we had refused whin the souldiers wanted to put it up, they'd have known we favoured '*the cause*,' an' they'd have watched the house, then sorra wan av 'the Bhoys,' would have found shilter benathe this roof anny moor."

"That's thrue for ye, Anty!" returned Owen, thoughtfully. "But why didn't ye tear it down whin the souldiers had gone, *mavourneen*?"

"Bekase mother wanted Misther O'Neill to see it first—an' sure there's no dhanger for his honour, there isn't wan among the poorest in all Wicklow that would bethray him."

Estelle had been regarding Owen and Anty for some moments, with considerable suspicion and anxiety, for though she could neither hear nor understand all that they were saying, yet she was able to gather sufficient information from their few hurried words to let her know that there was some uneasiness in the mind of Owen, regarding his master.

"Owen," she cried impatiently, "what is dat you are saying? *Tout beau! tout beau, ne parlez pas si vite!*"

"Yes, me lady!" answered Owen, hesitating, and looking helplessly at Anty. "Yes, me lady! d'ye see, that is——." Here Owen fairly stopped short, in perplexity as to what he should say in answer to Estelle, "Bedad! Anty avourneen," he said, turning to her, in desperation, "what is it her ladyship is sayin' at all, at all?"

"You will understand," said Estelle, "I do not comprehend when you do speak so quick, Owen."

"Sure, Owen," exclaimed Anty, now coming triumphantly to the front, "Misthress O'Neill is sayin' that she doesn't ondersthand us, onless we'd spake slow and plain enthirely."

"Troth, 'tis quick ye are at the foreign languages, *Anty agraph*," answered Owen, admiringly.

"What is it you were saying about dat paper on de wall?" asked Estelle, anxiously. "You did speak of Monsieur Morven O'Neill? What is it dat *he* has to do wid dis *Monsieur Chuny*?"

"Whist! not a word, Owen!" said Anty, in a low tone to him. "Misther O'Neill said she must niver hear the other name he was known by, among 'the Bhoys'; it would make her anxious ivery thime she'd hear av the narrow escapes he'd made."

"Ah! I see dere *is* someting wrong!" cried Estelle, going nearer to them. "Dere is someting dat you do both wish to keep from me!"

"Och! sorra bit, ma'am," returned Owen, again hesitating, and nervously turning his hat round in his hands, "Sorra thing, me lady—we—that is Anty an' mesilf, were sayin'—that—I mane it's Anty was afther tellin'——."

"*Eh bien?*" asked Estelle, impatiently. "Continue, *s'il vous plait!*"

"Did ye spake, ma'am?" inquired Owen, innocently. "What does she say, Anty, asthore?"

"Tell me *all—now!*" cried Estelle, quickly, her patience nearly exhausted. "Do you hear me, Owen and Anty? Tell me *now—tout de suite*—at dis moment!"

"Wid the greatest pleasure in life, me lady!" answered Owen, with alacrity, having at last thought of a way of extricating himself and Anty from the difficulty. "Sure, 'twas but little we were sayin', only Anty and mesilf do be thinkin' what improvements has been made in printin', by what it was a few years gone past. There's mighty illegant letthers on that same placard, ma'am; an' 'tis a pity the work av thim that done it wasn't used in a betther cause. Yes, ma'am, sure that's all, enthirely," concluded Owen, as he glanced

furtively at Estelle, to see how she was taking his explanation.

"But you did say someting of my husband?" persisted Estelle, "I did hear de name!"

"Niver a lie in it, me lady," replied Owen, innocently, "sure, it's oursilves were thinkin' how plased his honour always is to see annythin' that's nate an' purty."

"Dat is not all dat you were sayin', my good Owen! I did hear more. I could see dat dere was one great fear on your faces. But, no matter," she continued, with dignity, as she returned to her seat at the window. "No matter, Monsieur O'Neill, he will himself soon be here, I shall ask him."

"Troth! it's a divil av a fix the masther will be in *thin*, enthirely!" muttered Owen to himself.

The preceding very awkward conversation was here fortunately interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Kinahan, who, approaching Estelle, hastily curtsied to her and was about to speak, when she suddenly discovered Owen Maguire standing near Anty, and shyly twirling his hat about in his hands.

"Is that *you*, Owen Maguire?" she exclaimed, indignantly. "Sure, why is it ye didn't come to *mesilf* if ye wanted annythin'?"

"Troth, then, Misthress Kinahan, ma'am," he replied, "'twas Miss Anastasia hersilf opened the dure, an' axed me in here."

"Anty, is it?" cried Mrs. Kinahan, contemptuously. "Och, musha! I know well enough if the colleen was livin' in a palace, and yersilf in rags, she'd ax ye in to the best parlour, an' proud to give yez the welcome."

"Faith 'tis Anty's love that's the sthar av me path, Misthress Kinahan, ma'am," replied Owen, fervently; "an' sure its little enough happiness I have in me life that ye'd be thryin' to thake aven *that* light from mesilf."

"Owen Maguire!" returned Mrs. Kinahan, impressively, "haven't I tould ye agin an' agin that I'd have no love-makin' an' nonsense betwane yersilf and *my* colleen? An' troth, if ye thry it anny moore, I'll be afther givin' yez a pace av me mind, so I will."

"Bedad; *that* wouldn't be oncommon, annyhow, Misthress

Kinahan," said Owen, quietly. "But, sure, how is it I could help likin' such a colleen, an' hersilf so beautiful enthirely. Troth, ma'am," he continued, coaxingly, "they do be sayin' that it's Anty is all as wan as the other ind av yersilf, she's so like what ye were at her age ; not that ye look much oulder now, Misthress Kinahan, dear," he added, as he glanced slyly at the widow, to see the effect of his flattery.

"Now, Owen Maguire," returned Mrs. Kinahan, complacently stroking her apron, and evidently by no means insensible to Owen's soft words, "ye know well that ye naden't be afther thryin' the blarney wid mesilf. I tell ye wanst for all, there'll niver be annythin' more nor friendship betwane yersilf an' Anty ; so if ye don't like what's offered ye, why there's the *dure*, an' ye can go."

Estelle, who had been anxiously listening to the foregoing conversation, and now, seeing Mrs. Kinahan's hostile manner in speaking to Owen as she pointed to the door, hastily rose from her seat and came towards them, eager to use her influence in his behalf.

"Oh, madame !" she said, turning to Mrs. Kinahan, "what is it dat you are doing ? Why do you not love Owen ? He is a faithful, honourable man ; my husband he is much attached to him ; and indeed, indeed everyting dat *he*, my Morven, does love, *must* be good. Ah ! why is it dat you do give him de *congé* in dis manner ?"

"Give him *what*, ma'am ?" cried Mrs. Kinahan. "Och !" she continued, scornfully, "sure, then, savin' yer ladyship's prisince, it isn't the value av an ould sthick I'd be givin' to encourage the bhoy, let alone what ye mintioned this minute. I wondher," she added, in an undertone, "what she was manin', at all, at all ?"

"Niver mind her, me lady !" said Owen, with a sigh. "Sure, 'tis always the hard word wid her for mesilf."

"An' sure, I don't know what ye have agin Owen, mother," cried Anty, excitedly, as her tears fell fast. "He's the best bhoy in all the world, so he is, an'——"

Here Anty's comments on the attractions of her lover were brought to a summary conclusion, on the sound of a low whistle outside, somewhat resembling, in tone, the clear

sweet notes of a blackbird. It was a similar signal to that used by Owen a few minutes before, and by which the Rebels made known their presence to the inhabitants of the "Sham-rock," in order that they might receive warning if any of the soldiers chanced to be in the inn at the time.

"It is he ! It is my Morven !" cried Estelle, joyfully, on hearing the whistle.

"Sure it's right enough ye are, me lady ! 'Tis the young masther himself, an' no less," said Mrs. Kinahan, as she hastily left the room, followed by Owen and Anty, leaving Estelle to the pleasant anticipation of the meeting with her husband whom she had not seen for some time.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ A hundred thousand welcomes ! how my heart is gushing o’er,
With the love, and joy and wonder, thus to see your face once more,
How did I live without you, through the long, long days of woe,
It seems as if ’twould kill me, to be parted from you now.
You’ll never part me, darling—there’s a promise in your eye,
I may tend you while I’m living, you will watch me when I die ;
And if death but kindly lead me to the blessed home on high,
What a hundred thousand welcomes shall await you in the sky.”

HAYES’ BALLADS OF IRELAND.

It may be well to mention here, that some of the chief leaders of the Rebels, ashamed, it is supposed, at the motley attire and unmartial appearance of the forces under their command, had issued an order that they should, when on duty, wear a certain uniform. That selected, for those in the ranks, being coats of green cloth, made in the style of the military uniform of that date, with white facings and gilt buttons ; white corduroy breeches ; black leather gaiters ; three-cornered hats of black cloth, with a white loop ; black leather belts with pistols attached. They also carried muskets and bayonets. In the case of the officers, this uniform was further adorned with gold lace, according to the rank they held, their coats being made with white cloth lapels on the breasts and front of the skirts. They also wore white leather pantaloons and top boots, gold-laced three-cornered hats, long white military gloves, and a white scarf across the shoulder, ornamented at the ends with a harp and shamrocks in green silk, and green fringe. They always went heavily armed with swords and pistols. At times, when they left the shelter of the mountains and

mingled with the peasantry, it was considered advisable for the safety of the Rebels, that they should retain their ordinary attire ; but, on this occasion Morven O'Neill, having received orders to attend at a council of several of the chief leaders of the movement, now wore the Rebel uniform, which was, however, concealed beneath a long military-looking cloak, of which, on entering the room, he divested himself, and, throwing it carelessly over a chair, he hastened with outstretched hands to meet Estelle.

"Estelle! Light of my life!" he exclaimed, as he tenderly embraced her.

"Oh, Morven! my darling, my husband!" cried Estelle. "It is so long since you could come to me. Ah! if you did but know how I have been watching and waiting for the time when I should see you again."

"Estelle!" replied Morven, earnestly, "you must remember, dear one, that though we are parted, my heart is ever with you ; and through all my trials, through all the rough life I have to lead, the thought of your faithful love brings happiness to me. But it is getting every day more difficult for me to come to you. All the regular roads to the mountains, such as they were, are guarded now by soldiers ; it is fortunate for me, that I know the wild passes so well, and that *I* can go with safety where no stranger's feet can tread, having been accustomed to every kind of mountain climbing from boyhood. Still, if they but once found *that* road, if any one betrayed our hiding-place, all communication would be cut off from us."

"Ah! den I should not see you," exclaimed Estelle, despairingly. "Oh, Morven! I could not bear it; indeed, indeed, I should be desolated! But look!" she cried, suddenly, drawing Morven towards the placard on the wall, "tell me what does *dat* mean?"

"Who could have brought *this* here?" muttered Morven, anxiously.

"I do want you to tell me," continued Estelle, eagerly, "who is dis *Monsieur Michael Cluny*, Morven? Is he one of de brave men under *your* command?"

"Then she does not evidently know yet that *I* am *Michael Cluny*: that is well!" murmured Morven, in an undertone.

"No," he added, aloud. "He is *not* one of the men under my command, Estelle."

Very earnestly Estelle looked up at Morven as she put her next question.

"Is he, den, de gentleman we did meet de day we did arrive here, dat spoke to you and did seem in one *great* excitement?"

"No, that was General Holt," replied Morven. "The secret must be kept from her, at all costs," he added to himself.

"Is it, den, de proud, handsome, military-looking gentleman, wid de large dark eyes, and de black hair, and de pale, *triste* face?" asked Estelle, perseveringly. "You will remember, Morven? He did come here to see you, a few days after."

"No," he answered, "that was my friend, Robert Emmet."

"Den tell me, my Morven! have I ever seen dis *Monsieur Cluny*?"

"No, Estelle! you have not seen *Michael Cluny*," replied Morven, after a slight hesitation. "But now, do not let us waste our precious moments in talking about this placard; tell me of yourself rather, my dear one.—Ah! what is that?" he asked, as Estelle went to the window-seat and returned with the white silk scarf she had been embroidering.

"It is my work," replied Estelle, proudly. "Is it dat you are pleased wid it, *mon ami*? It is for you—in de place of de plain one you do now have. Will you den wear it for my sake?"

"Indeed I will, and right proudly too; as each gallant knight of old used to wear the token of his lady love."

Eagerly Estelle divested Morven of the plain scarf he had been wearing, and replaced it with the one she had been making for him, while he watched her every movement with tender, loving eyes.

"It does suit well wid de rest of your costume; de *tout-ensemble* it is *élégant*—it is *distingué*," said Estelle. "But, oh!" she continued, anxiously, "it is my hope dat it will not be for long you will wear it, my Morven. I do look wid one great impatience, for de time when you shall leave such wild mountain life. Ah! my love, I have every day one great

fear for you. If it was to be success, den I would take a lively interest in dis grand cause; but de good Father Bernard, he does tell, dat it will be one great failure, and he has anxiety for you to give up de command of such wild men; and indeed, indeed, I should be overjoyed if it could be so, Morven!"

"Hush, little traitor!" cried Morven, smiling. "It is well that my men do not hear you trying thus to influence their Captain."

"Ah! if any word of mine *would* influence *you*!" sighed Estelle, sadly. "Always now, dere is one great terror at my heart dat some danger may befall you. Think of it, Morven!" she pleaded, earnestly. "Oh! for my sake, let us leave dis place before it be too late. Dis cause will never succeed; I do hear on every hand dat it is impossible. And does not even de placard dere, show you de English Government are every day taking more steps, my Morven!" she continued, earnestly, her hands clasped round his arm, her anxious sorrowful eyes raised to his, "if it was all to end in victory, den I dare not urge you to forsake a cause dat was to be of lasting good to de country you do love so well; and I also—of *nécessité*—since it is *your* country; but it may all end in desolation, defeat, and despair. And oh! dey may put up de cruel placard offering a reward for *your* capture as dey have done for dat poor *Monsieur Cluny*."

"If she but knew who this *Michael Cluny* really was," thought Morven, anxiously. "Estelle," he said, determinedly, "in this case even *your* persuasions, dear as you are to me, would be of no avail. You should know me better than to suppose that I would draw back, after having once decided to attain any object; I should win, or die in the attempt. See," he continued, pointing to an antique ring on his finger, "here is my charm; this old ring bears the arms and motto of my family. If, at any time, I grew weary of the constant fight against a fate that has ever seemed adverse to me, this would act as a spell and lead me onward to death or glory; with heaven for my guide, my sword for my companion. You have not heard the old story of my ancestor! In one of the ancient expeditions to Ireland, the leader declared that whoever first *touched* the shore towards which

they were sailing should possess the territory he reached. O'Neill, from whom descended the Prince of Ulster, determined to win the promised reward, and seeing that another boat was fast gaining on him, with his sword cut off his left hand and threw it on the shore. Thus it was *the O'Neill's hand* that first touched the soil, and in this manner he fairly won Ulster for himself and his descendants. Hence the origin of our crest, an arm embowed in armour, the hand grasping a sword, and the motto, '*Lamh dhearg Eirin*'—The red hand of Ireland. While there is life within me, I shall never part with this talisman, but if aught should befall me, I shall, if it lies within my power, arrange so that it may be sent to you, Estelle. None but an O'Neill must wear it ; so if ever you receive this ring, you will know what has become of me."

"Oh, Morven ! my love ! my love !" cried Estelle, weeping, as she buried her face in her hands.

"Estelle ! do not weep, *mavourneen* !" said Morven, tenderly, trying to soothe her. "This may never be. I trust that the day of our triumph is not far distant, the great and final struggle must soon come now. Heaven knows if I shall live to see this end accomplished, and the hopes of my country fulfilled—but if I fall, it will be in a glorious cause."

"Ah ! my own Morven ! I do pray of you not to speak of dat—it desolates me," sobbed Estelle.

"You must bear it bravely, jewel of my heart, as a patriot's bride should do. Should you miss me so *very* much, Estelle ?" he asked, earnestly.

"Miss you !" cried Estelle, mournfully. "Oh ! love of my heart ! I should pray dat I might die also, for it is den all de light would be gone out of my life."

"Listen, Estelle !" said Morven, as he caressingly placed his arm around her shoulder. "There is a brighter picture ! If I live, and the success of our cause is established, then we will go to some fair spot in Erin's Isle, and watch the happiness it has been my privilege to help to obtain for my countrymen. Tell me, should you like that, dear one ?"

"Ah, Morven ! need you to ask me ? Would dat such joy could come to us now," sighed Estelle.

* Tenderly drawing her closer to him, Morven, smilingly

commenced, to sing the following words, to the sweet old Irish melody, *Sheela-na-Guire*.

“Oh! had we some bright little Isle of our own,
In a blue summer ocean far off and alone,
Where a leaf never dies in the still blooming bowers,
And the bee banquets on through a whole year of flowers.
Where the sun loves to pause
With so fond a delay
That the night only draws
A thin veil o’er the day;
Where simply to feel that we breathe, that we live,
Is worth the best joy that life elsewhere can give.

There with souls ever ardent and pure as the clime,
We should love as they loved in the first golden time,
The glow of the sunshine, the balm of the air
Would steal to our hearts, and make all summer there.
With affection as free
From decline as the bowers,
And with hope, like the bee,
Living always on flowers.
Our life should resemble a long day of light,
And our death come on holy and calm as the night.”

The last clear notes of Morven’s musical and resonant voice had scarcely died away in a low, sweet cadence, when Mrs. Kinahan entered the room hastily, and in a state of considerable excitement.

“Misther Morven!” she cried, hurriedly, “if ye plaze, ’tis the Bhoys were to hould a matin’ here, an’ it’ll maybes not be long bafore they come, so, as her ladyship wouldn’t like thim to see her, I thought I’d be givin’ yez the warnin’.”

“Thank you, Mrs. Kinahan!” replied Morven, “I remember now. Magin was to meet them here to discuss some important matters, and it is no doubt his intention to make one of his speeches, I suppose, on the state of affairs. Well! I believe his Yankee sharpness and audacity help to rouse the Boys a little. They will not be here for a short while yet; however, this is no place for you, Estelle, in any case.”

“I do seldom come—only sometimes for de change, when dere is no one here, and because it is from dis win-

dow dat I can watch best for you, my Morven," said Estelle.

"See!" she added, drawing him towards the window seat. "It is dere I do sit wid my work, and watch de road to de mountains. But I am willing to go where you do wish."

"Come then, dearest!" said Morven, as he led her from the room.

Mrs. Kinahan soon followed them; but was careful to carry Morven's hat, cloak, and gloves with her, and to gather up Estelle's work materials, being anxious to efface all signs of their presence before the arrival of Magin and the "Bold Boys." She had only just time to do so, and had scarcely disappeared with her burden, by one door, when Thaddeus Magin entered by another. He still wore his ordinary attire, not being at this time on active duty, and the meeting now about to take place being considered somewhat of a private nature.

"The boys airn't arrived yet, then!" muttered Magin, as he looked cautiously round the room. "Wa'al, I guess they air never partic'lar slick at keeping appointments,—they like better to dawdle around all day doing nothing. Ah!" he cried, in a tone of satisfaction, as his eyes fell upon the placard on the wall, "so that's up, is it?" Coolly dragging one of the chairs near the spot, he sat astride upon it, and crossing his arms over the back, read, in exultant tones, the placard before him.

"A THOUSAND POUNDS REWARD!

The above reward will be given by the British Government to any person or persons who will give such information, or assist in such manner, as may effect the capture of the person of that daring Rebel against His Most Gracious Majesty's Government, well-known under the name of *Michael Cluny*, the so-called Captain of the lawless band of Rebels known by the title of "The Bold Boys of Wicklow." Also

FIFTY POUNDS REWARD

for information that will lead to the capture of any member of the above band.

Any person who wishes to give such information, must apply to the Commanding Officer of the troops at Glencree Barracks: or to the Officer in Charge of the Detachment of Cavalry stationed at Bray."

“Wa'al!” said Magin, when he had satisfactorily completed his perusal of the placard, “Mister Morven O'Neill, alias *Michael Cluny*, I calc'late I'm uncommon needful of a thousand pounds, so I guess I'll hev a try for that there reward, that's if I can do it without implicatin' myself, but I reckon I'll take my time to fix everything first, and make all square and safe. I'll hev to be careful, for there airn't no gainsayin' of the fact that the Captain's a spry man, an' with all his darned high-flown notions and romantic nonsense about “*the great cause*,” he's cute an' clever enough, there's plenty of gumption an' real grit in him, an' I guess it'll hev to be a dratted slick one to hoodwink *him*; but I guess *Thaddeus Magin* is just the boy to do it. I'll get that thar thousand pounds first, and then I calc'late I'll hev a try for as many of the fifties as can be got with safety. I'm dashed,” he continued, savagely, bringing his club stick down upon the back of the chair, with a force that threatened to break one of Mrs. Kinahan's cherished articles of furniture, “I'm dashed if I don't at least find *some* way to get quit of Mister Morven O'Neill, with his grand notions, an' then I'll marry his pretty French widdy—take command of the ‘Bold Boys’ for a time, get plenty of money out of the arrant fools who favour ‘*the cause*,’ and then I guess I'll make tracks to America, as fast as I can. Ah!” he exclaimed, suddenly, as he started to his feet, and going to the door, looked out cautiously. “I thought I heard some one coming! It's ‘the Boys’ I calc'late! No! Why I'm dashed if it airn't the Captain—Morven O'Neill himself, in uniform too, and without his cloak and hat! Wa'al now, I can't say that he airn't daring enough, to venture here when that placard's up. He's covered up pretty general with his large cloak, and his hat well pulled over his eyes, but it wouldn't be easy for that thar boy to disguise himself in any fixings, for thar air no doubt he's uncommon spry an' handsome, and doesn't he know how to cut a swather an' to set off his good looks. I guess it's a caution to see him diked out like a prince, an' bedizened with gold lace, while the rest of us air only in the common dress of peasants when we airn't on active duty. But I calc'late that must be stopped, the young aristocrat must be put down. He's talking to some one in the other

room now," he continued, taking another look out through an aperture in the door. "I wonder who it is ? I reckon I don't want to meet *him* just now though, so I'll slope for the present, till I see the other 'Boys' arrive."

CHAPTER IX.

“ Have you not seen the timid tear
Steal trembling from mine eye ?
Have you not mark'd the flush of fear,
Or caught the murmured sigh ?
And can you think my love is chill,
Nor fix'd on you—on you alone ?
And can you rend by doubting still,
A heart so much—so much your own ? ”

MOORE.

At the time when the events related in the preceding chapters were taking place in the “ Shamrock,” Captain Annesley and Eveleen Corrie were walking to and fro on the terrace in front of the Colonel's quarters at Glencree Barracks.

They were engaged in earnest conversation ; but to judge by the expression on both faces, they were considerably excited, and their discussion was the reverse of amicable. They had been together for some time, and many curious glances had been cast at the lovers—for such they were well known to be—by passing officers and soldiers. Shilrick O'Toole in particular, who, knowing his Captain so well, and possessing an extra share of Irish tact and bright intelligence, easily read the weather signs in the face and gestures of Annesley, to whom he was so devoted, looked on, at a distance, with some anxiety in his boyish mind, not unmixed with indignation at the thought that *anyone*, even Miss Corrie, should dare to say, or do aught that could cause such a heavy cloud to rest on the dark, handsome face of “ his honour, the Captain.”

Nap followed closely in the wake of Eveleen and Annesley,

looking much disgusted, however, on finding that the walk was to be of no longer extent than the terrace, and that for the present he was not receiving his usual and accustomed amount of attention. He therefore joyfully hailed the appearance of his friend Shilrick, and ran across the barrack square to him, as if to inform the drummer of his disappointed expectations, and claim his ever-ready sympathy.

Shilrick, taking pity on him, went for a short tour round the outskirts of the barracks ; but when Nap once more returned to the terrace, he was fairly indignant to find that there were still no farther signs of his mistress extending her walk ; and indeed, that now matters were worse than before, as Annesley and Eveleen had even come to a halt just outside the Colonel's quarters, appearing more animated and earnest in their conversation than at first.

"Well, Eveleen !" said Annesley, haughtily, "it is useless for us to discuss this subject any more ; it is evidently one upon which we can never agree."

"You speak rightly, Armoric," replied Eveleen, coldly, "we had much better discontinue a conversation that only seems to cause endless doubts, recriminations, and coldness, for you certainly seem determined to misunderstand me now, in everything that I do or say."

"No, Eveleen, I do not *misunderstand*," answered Annesley. "Unfortunately I can see only too plainly that your views regarding those rascally Rebels, have completely changed since we came here, and indeed within the last few weeks."

"I do not know why you should style them '*rascally Rebels*,' Armoric," said Eveleen, indignantly. "Their intentions, hopes and aspirations are all most brave and honourable, while the cause for which they are fighting is certainly a noble one."

"Their intentions brave and honourable!—the cause a noble one !" cried Annesley, sarcastically. "Eveleen, your sense of right and wrong seems to have been strangely perverted lately !"

"Not at all !" answered Eveleen. "It is true that the Rebels *may be*—nay, if you will, that they *are*—mistaken in thinking that they can ever accomplish lasting good for their

country ; but their wish to do so is none the less praiseworthy."

"Are you mad, Eveleen?" asked Annesley, indignantly, "that you should hold such opinions; *you*, the daughter, of as loyal an officer as ever held the King's commission, the affianced wife of one who abhors disloyalty and treachery."

"Oh!" said Eveleen, coldly, "then you wish me to model my opinions and my thoughts upon those of my father and yourself? To consider, before every word I speak, that you are both officers serving under the British Government, and that therefore I am bound to feel, to think, and to speak only according to order."

"It is certainly very strange that you should uphold our enemies, Eveleen," remonstrated Annesley.

"Then probably you will wish your future wife to lose her own identity altogether, to be simply an echo of your own words, to have no opinions, thoughts, or ideas that have not been formed after the exact pattern of your own—to hold no views in any way opposed to the dictates of the British Government?" said Eveleen, contemptuously.

"You know well what I mean, Eveleen," returned Annesley, angrily. "There *must* be some *extraordinary* reason for the present change in *your* views, and that makes you persist in taking the part of a set of idle rogues and vagabonds, who care nothing for our unhappy country, but have only joined this rebellion in the hope that by bringing the horrors of a civil war upon us, they may, by means of treachery and artifice, turn all to their own ultimate advantage."

"It is true that such *may* be the case, with a few foreigners who have joined the cause, but it is not so with those of our brave countrymen who are so earnest in their endeavours to procure justice for Ireland, and if the majority of the people wish for a King and Government of their own, well!" continued Eveleen, determinedly, "I cannot see why they should not have it."

"Ah!" exclaimed Annesley, hotly, a storm of passion gathering in his dark eyes. "Possibly you have found some more interesting friend, some dearer acquaintance than

myself. Probably a new lover who favours the Rebels, or is even himself connected with them," he added, jealously, as he turned from Eveleen and walked away to within a short distance of her.

It was fortunate that he did so, for had he been near her, he could not have failed to notice Eveleen's sudden start, and the fear and anxiety which were written so plainly on her expressive countenance. Her face was now pale to the lips, and her voice trembled in a manner that well-nigh betrayed her agitation.

"Who—oh, *who* told you this ?" asked Eveleen, as she went close to Annesley, and laying her hand on his arm, lifted her beautiful hazel eyes, now dark and bright with fear and excitement, and gazed anxiously into the half-sorrowful, half-indignant face of her lover.

"Who told me ?" inquired Annesley, astonished at her eagerness. "Why, nobody ! It was only my own supposition, 'Eveleen."

"Then allow me to tell you that *your supposition* was wrong," said Eveleen, haughtily. "I have no lover but yourself ; and you know it."

"Well !" replied Annesley, with equal coldness, "it was certainly the only reason which I could assign as a cause for your strange expressions in favour of the Rebellion, Eveleen. You are at this moment more than half a Rebel yourself. I cannot tell you how it has grieved me to see the change in you, who, as I have said, being a soldier's daughter, and a soldier's promised wife, should have proved always loyal and true."

"Fortunately, I can save you from the terrible fate of being the affianced husband of one who is 'more than half a Rebel,' and in *your* estimation no longer 'loyal and true,'" said Eveleen, indignantly. "And as you seem suddenly to have grown so dissatisfied with me, perhaps you may prefer a wife who will simply echo all you say, as Miss Ellen Desmond seemed disposed to do the other day, when you were conversing so earnestly with her."

"I could scarcely appear more earnest in my conversation with Miss Desmond, than *you* were, with that impertinent young cavalry fellow, Rochfort," replied Annesley, sarcastic-

ally. "But, enough of this," he continued. "We have been disputing like two children, and, as neither of us appears to be in the best of humours this afternoon, it is as well that we should part, before our little difference ends in a worse result."

"You are right, Captain Annesley," answered Eveleen, bowing to him, with great dignity. "Allow me, then, to wish you a very good afternoon, and to express the hope that you may be so fortunate as to secure a companion who, like *Miss Ellen Desmond*, may always say exactly what you wish, and never shock your lofty sensibilities by the expression of an opinion on any point differing from your own."

"Accept my best thanks, Miss Corrie," replied Annesley, with a very low bow. "Allow *me* to express the hope that you are mistaken in the *honourable feeling* and the *noble cause* of the one who has evidently been so successful in winning you as a supporter of the Rebels."

With a final ceremonious bow on each side, they separated, Annesley crossing the square to his own rooms, while Eveleen returned slowly, and with a heavy heart entered her father's quarters, Nap faithfully following her, and with a relieved mind, for during the last few minutes he had been loudly expressing his opinion of the conversation on the terrace, by a long continued howl, unrebuked by the lovers, whose minds were far too much occupied to notice him.

When Eveleen arrived in her own room, she hastily divested herself of her hat and the scarf she had worn about her shoulders and throwing herself on the sofa, buried her face among the cushions, and burst into a torrent of tears. Nap doing his best to enact the part of comforter, trying to push his little black nose between Eveleen's tightly-clasped hands, and sitting beside her, gazing into her face with a world of loving sympathy in those pathetic brown eyes. Sympathy is always sweet, in whatever form it comes to us, and Eveleen caught up her little pet in her arms, while her tears fell fast on his silky head.

Ah! poor, loving Nap! Well may you look sorrowful, for there are dark, dreary days of grief and despair coming for your mistress, your friend Shilrick, and all whom you hold most dear in that faithful little heart of yours!

Eveleen Corrie loved Annesley with a depth and truth of which, even he, had no idea ; but, like himself, she possessed a warm, quick temper, which, on this occasion, he had fairly aroused by his sarcasm, and his doubts as to her good faith, and these, together with the feeling of jealousy (which had been artfully instilled into *her* heart, by an interested friend of Miss Ellen Desmond) and her constant fear and anxiety concerning her cousin, Morven O'Neill, combined with a wish, even against her own better judgment, to defend his cause ; all had worked together to give that strange appearance of nervous irritability, and coldness of manner, that Annesley could not understand. On the other hand, it may be said that Annesley was scarcely to be blamed for his feeling of annoyance. Hitherto, there had been naught to disturb the serenity of his love affair, and the most perfect understanding and confidence had all along existed between himself and Eveleen.

Miss Ellen Desmond's English friend, however, had carefully contrived to introduce the demon of jealousy into Annesley's heart as well as Eveleen's ; she had cleverly, and with infinite trouble, worthy of a better cause, made :

"The little rift within the lover's lute."

And now, Annesley had an instinctive feeling that Eveleen was withholding some secret from him, and that all was not as it used to be between them. It was also inexplicable to him how, in so short a time, there should be such a complete revolution in her opinions, and how the girl, who used to be as loyal and true as himself and her father, should now be as he had said, "more than half a Rebel."

It is true that Annesley's suspicions had some foundation, though he knew it not, with regard to Eveleen's sudden interest in one connected with the Rebels, and he was also aware that many sons of noblemen and gentlemen of birth and position secretly favoured the Rebellion, and were yet mingling in daily intercourse with the most loyal of His Majesty's subjects. This knowledge, as may be supposed, did not in any way tend to lessen his suspicions of what

might be the cause of Eveleen's change, so that when Annesley returned to his own quarters he was in no happier frame of mind than was Eveleen.

After flinging down his hat in one corner, his sword in another, and tossing his gloves to the opposite end of the room, he overturned a couple of chairs in his wild progress, and nearly tumbled over a cushion on which a good-natured and unoffending cat had been peacefully enjoying her afternoon slumber. The said puss being a special pet of Annesley's (one of whose good qualities was a great fondness for animals) sat looking reproachfully at him, blinking her sleepy eyes, and wondering whether she might venture to take up her favorite post on his shoulder, as Annesley threw himself into an easy chair, feeling quite prepared to quarrel with his dearest friend had he chanced to appear before him at that moment, and vowing bitter vengeance against his rival in the affections of Eveleen Corrie ; a rival, however, who as yet existed entirely in his own vivid imagination.

CHAPTER X.

“ But joy like a sunbeam shall burst o’er the West,
The sad cease to mourn, and the weary find rest ;
The demon of discord shall fly from thy shore
And feuds that disgrace thee, awaken no more.
The harp so long silent again shall be strung ;
Glad songs as of old by thy minstrels be sung ;
Past wrongs shall be righted, and all nations see
Our own dearest Island the home of the free.”

T. C. S. CORRY, M.D., F.R.C.S.L.

From the words of Thaddeus Magin, after his perusal of the placard on the wall of the room at the hostelry, the reader may judge of his feelings of jealousy, hatred, and envy towards Morven O'Neill. He had long been waiting and watching for an opportunity to do him an injury, but, with his wily nature and deep cunning, he contrived to keep the Rebels, with whom he was associated, from all knowledge of his ill-feeling, and the dire treachery of his plans for the destruction of their young Captain, who was a favourite with them all.

His jealousy was also heightened by the discovery that the fair French girl whom he had so graciously condescended to honour with his attentions, was the wife of Morven O'Neill.

A few minutes after Magin had left the room, Morven entered, followed by Kerry O'Toole and Anty Kinahan.

Morven was now partially disguised with his long cloak and hat.

“ Can I be doin' annythin' moor for yer honour ? ” asked Anty, curtsying respectfully to him.

“ Not just now, Anty,” he replied. “ Yet stay !—Have any of the Boys come yet ? ”

"No, yer honour, I think not."

"Then give me warning before you show them in here, and admit no one for the present. Do you understand, Anty, my colleen?"

"Sure, an' I do, yer honour."

"I cannot stay much longer as I have to meet some of our leaders, in the gloaming, and a long distance I have to go too; however, I wish to speak to Kerry O'Toole before I leave."

"I'll give ye good warnin', sir, niver fear," said Anty, as she moved about the room, placing chairs for the meeting, and otherwise "reddin' up" as she called it.

"So you recognised me as I came to the house, Kerry? I thought my figure was tolerably well concealed beneath this voluminous cloak, and I can generally hide my face pretty well under the shadow of my hat," said Morven. "How is it you knew me so quickly?"

"Sure, it was yer honour's voice, I knew agin, the insthant I heard ye spake to Misthress Kinahan," answered Kerry, "but oh, Misther O'Neill!" he added, anxiously, "how is it that ye daur venture here, at all, at all?"

"You forget!" returned Morven, proudly, "I am *an O'Neill*."

"That's thrue for ye, sir," replied Kerry. "But sure 'tis a mighty great dhanger ye run, wid a price like *that* set on yer head," he continued, pointing to the placard. "There might be some mane craythur who'd maybes be afther givin' information agin yer honour."

"Why, Kerry! what have I to fear?" asked Morven. "Do I not know that there is not one whom I could not trust implicitly, not one, even among the very poorest of the people, who would betray me? I know well, that if I went from shanty to shanty, I should find, in each home, however poor the owners might be, a safe shelter, and a kindly welcome, for have not the O'Neills and the peasantry ever returned love for love, and has not hospitality, like some bright gem, ever shone in the hearts of the Irish people?"

"Troth it's yer honour that's right enough there, annyhow," said Kerry.

"And what about this placard, Kerry?" asked Morven,

contemptuously, as he went forward and read it carefully. "Do they think to find me in *that* way? Anty, my colleen," he continued, turning to her.

"Is it to mesilf yer honour was spakin'?"

"Yes, I want you to send your mother to me."

"Sure, an' I will, sir!" replied Anty, as she hastened away to give Morven's message.

"One thing I *can* say, Kerry, *they shall never take Morven O'Neill, alive,*" said the young Rebel captain, determinedly.

Mrs. Kinahan was not long in obeying Morven's summons, and soon appeared, followed by Anty, whose curiosity was by no means proof against the general undercurrent of excitement and mystery.

"Sure, Misther Morven darlin'," cried Mrs. Kinahan, "it's Anty tould me that yer honour wanted to spake to me!"

"Who put that placard up there?" asked Morven.

"Och! now it isn't yer honour that would be angry wid me for lettin' thim do it. Sure 'twas a sergeant an some Dragoon souldiers done it—woorse luck to thim, but it's mesilf couldn't help it, at all, at all, dy'e see; 'tis only me an' Anty was in the house at the thime, an' it wasn't aisy to stop thim. An'—"

"Take it down, Anty!" ordered Morven, peremptorily, and interrupting the widow's flow of words and explanations which he feared, from experience, might, like the brook, "go on for ever."

"Take it down!" he repeated, haughtily, and with the air of one who is not accustomed to have his commands disputed.

"Sure it's plased I'll be to do that same, yer honour," said Anty, with alacrity.

"Och! thin it isn't behindhand I'll be in helpin' the colleen," cried Kerry.

It was not long before that which had once been an immense government placard, lay a heap of torn paper at the feet of the energetic Kerry and Anty.

"Did the soldiers ask you any questions when they were here, Mistress Kinahan?" inquired Morven.

"Quistions, is it?" exclaimed the widow. "Musha!

then it's the sergeant bate all *I* iver heard for talkin', an', says he, when he was goin' away, 'I suppose ye'll niver be havin' anny av thim 'Bould Boys' here, Misthress Kinahan, ye'll not be afther favourin' thim at all?'

"'Favourin' thim is it?' says I, 'troth it's the mane, idle blackguards they are. Och! sure 'tis little favour an' small wilcome the likes av *thim* would be getting here, sergeant, dear.' So wid that he gets up quite plased enthirely. 'Then it's all right!' says he, 'the placard will be sane by thim that's aginst the cause.' 'The sorra wan ilse,' says I 'an' sure I've let it sthay there iver since, till yer honour had sane it, manin' to thake it down the minute afther. But, faith! 'tis yersilf naden't fear, Misther Morven darlin', for there's not wan in all Wicklow that would bethray ye. An' if it's plasin' to ye, I'll niver let another souldier inside av these dures agin."

"No, no, I cannot have you lose custom on my account," said Morven, kindly, his usual unselfishness coming once more to the front; "and perhaps I have done wrong in making you take down that placard now," he added, thoughtfully. "If they come here again it might get you into trouble."

"The sorra bit!" answered the widow, nodding her head, cunningly. "Sure, it's mesilf that'll aisily mulvather the sergeant, annyhow. "Troth! *'tis the walls that's damp, an' the paint does be always palin' off.* An' as to custom, sure, if 'twas to harm yer honour, I'd niver let another bhoy in here, at all, at all. Och, *musha!* who's a betther right than *Ua Néill* to be givin' his ordhers in Mike Kinahan's house, that's dead an' gone, rest his sowl?"

"Ah! you are a true friend to *the cause*, Mrs. Kinahan," observed Morven, smiling.

"Troth! an' I am, moor power to it! An' so was poor Mike," she sighed. "May the heavens be his bed this night!"

"Amin," responded Anty, solemnly crossing herself.

"Come, Anty!" said Mrs. Kinahan, at last, "maybes his honour would like to be afther spakin' to Kerry O'Toole his lone."

It is to be feared that Mrs. Kinahan's veracity suffered

considerably, owing to the difficulties that must always be experienced, and the disastrous consequences that almost inevitably attend those who attempt to serve two opposite parties. It is an established fact that one falsehood generally calls for many ; the first is difficult, and is probably spoken with an uneasy blush and an uncertainty of speech ; the second is less trying, until at last untruths flow as easily from the lips as the truth, and those who have uttered them find that they are drawn into a vortex of falsity and deception from which it is well-nigh impossible to disentangle themselves.

The only excuse that might be offered in the case of the widow, is that she had been reared in an atmosphere of rebellion and secrecy, around which hovered all the fascinating glamour and glitter of romance ; so that, in her judgment, there could be no consideration as to whether any action was right or wrong, if committed in behalf of one of the O'Neills, or "*the cause*," that mythical idol at whose shrine so many brave, true Irish hearts have been wont to worship for centuries, and upon which thousands of valuable lives have been sacrificed, and hard-earned gold poured unsparingly, that might have enriched a kingdom. Ireland has had the dire misfortune never to be without "*a cause*," it has been her ruin and her curse in the past, it is to be feared that it will continue to be so in the future, until that promised time, "when the shadows flee away," and all troubled hearts are at peace, and at rest for ever.

When Mrs. Kinahan had again left the room, followed by Anty, Morven once more turned to Kerry, and addressed him earnestly :

"Well, Kerry, is it quite useless trying to persuade you to join us ?" he asked. "Magin tells me that he has tried often to do so. Oh, Kerry ! is it possible that you can still hesitate, when you know so well the noble cause to which we are devoting ourselves ?"

"Sure, what good is it I'd be to ye, Misther O'Neill ? I couldn't bring anny money to help ye, at all, at all."

"But you can bring one true, brave heart, and we trust much to the number and the valour of our forces."

"Oh ! Misther O'Neill dear, have ye thought well av all this ?" asked Kerry, earnestly. "Will it succeed ? If not,

I'm feared that 'tis the sad sorrow and despair it'll bring to our poor misfortunat an' disthressful country."

"It *must* succeed, Kerry! The right always prospers in the end!" answered Morven. "Surely, such oppression as we have suffered cannot last for ever."

"Och! Mither Morven, troth I was nare forgettin' there's a thrifle av warnin' I'd be afther givin' yersilf," said Kerry, going closer to O'Neill, and speaking in a subdued voice, "Don't be puttin' too much faith in that Yankee, Thaddeus Magin. The other American, Silas Charleston, is well enough, but don't thrust Magin."

"Why?" inquired Morven.

"Bekase 'tis certain I am that he's not thrue to yer honour."

"I have had my doubts about him sometimes of late," said Morven, thoughtfully. "He is the only one of my band whom I have ever had cause to suspect. But what do you know about him, Kerry?"

"That he's false as the Devil!" replied Kerry, promptly. "An', bedad, I know that he's afther a diff'rnt game to yer honour. Sure, *he* doesn't want the ould landlords bhack agin, and a King av our own enthirely. *He's* thinkin' av dividin' the land, d'ye see? Yes, sir—or somethin' av that soort, an' may I niver live to see me own funeral! if it's himself wouldn't have the biggest slice out av the same division. It's a notion he's brought wid him from America, I'm thinkin', and he's thryin' to raise the Bhoys on that head, an' promisin' they're all to be aquil, an' wealthy gintlemen enthirely."

"Ah! I had no idea of this!" exclaimed Morven, somewhat startled. "Tell me all you know, Kerry!"

"Begorrah! there are the Bhoys now!" cried Kerry, starting, on hearing the sound of many voices outside the door. "Sure, if it's plasins' to yer honour, I'll just be afther sthayin' a while an' hearin' what it is Magin would be sayin' to thim at the matin."

"I do not think they will allow you to do so, Kerry!" replied Morven. "You have not yet decided to join '*the cause*.'"

"Sure it's mesilf that'll make belave I want to hear all

about it first, d'ye see, sir," said Kerry. "But maybes 'twould be bettther if yer honour'll trust me wid the pass-word."

"It is this !" answered Morven, who knew that he could trust Kerry implicitly. "When you are asked the question, '*How does your heart beat this day?*' you must reply, '*True to the Green!*' And now I must leave you ; if Magin sees us together, he may be suspicious."

The noise outside was increasing every moment, voices grew louder and were raised in stormy altercation, fiery expressions in many languages and various accents were heard, in reply to Mrs. Kinahan's attempts to throw oil on the troubled waters, by an indiscriminate use of the blarney, on all sides.

"The sorra wan av ye will go into that same room, at all, at all, ontill I open the door for yez," she was heard saying outside, having at last lost patience with her refractory guests.

"Aisy now, bhoys !" said Anty, more soothingly. "Sure 'tis a sthranger that's in it, an maybes he'd be curious if he saw the lot av ye together."

"Wa'al now !" exclaimed Magin, angrily. "I guess that air darned cool on your part, lettin' in strangers, gal, when yer knew we were goin' to meet here."

"Break open the dures, bhoys !" shouted Sheil Casey, who had tried both ; but found that they were locked inside ; Kerry having fastened them but an instant before, as he hastily turned to Morven to explain his reason for so doing ; "Ye'll not get out now, Misther O'Neill dear, by either av the dures, the Bhoys are at both, but sure there's the windy,"

"Ah ! the window will do quite as well as a door for me, Kerry," replied Morven, laughing, as he threw open the wide lattice, and sprang out, Kerry taking the precaution of closing the window after him, before he attempted to open the doors for the men who were so clamorous in their demands for admittance.

CHAPTER XI.

“Why is it thus that fairest things
The soonest fleet and die?
That when most light is on their wings,
They're then but spread to fly?
Then look not thou so bright and blest,
For ah! there comes a fear,
When brow like thine looks happiest,
That grief is then most near.”

MOORE.

The last rays of a bright June sunset were fast fading behind the soft grey veil of the gloaming; the deep, dense shadow fell on a lonely expanse of wild heather-clad moorland, across which a solitary wayfarer was slowly wending her way, the only human being on all that wide, vast track of land, with its background of rugged hills stretching far in the hazy distance.

Two months later, and the moor would be covered with Nature's own carpet of purple heather; but now it was clothed with sombre brown and green of the darkest shade, while the thick white mist that was gradually rising out of the earth gave to the scene a strangely weird and fantastic appearance. It was a fitting time and place for the wail of the Banshee to be heard, or for the phantoms and goblins to hold their revel.

Thalia Coghlan, however, thought not of such things, or of aught that was gloomy; though alone in that wild solitude she felt no fear, and although she had walked many a weary mile that day, yet she felt no sense of fatigue, for her heart was happy and at ease. There was no trouble *now*, to lend its leaden weight to the tired feet in *her* case, no sor-

row to cloud the sunshine of her path. Her face bore an expression of the most perfect happiness, and innocent content, while her lovely eyes were filled with the tender light of peace and hope.

All was going well now with Thalia Coghlan. Her lover, who was dearer to her than all else in the world, was faithful and true, and he had completely contrived to "put the comedher" on her grandmother, so that the old woman had become much attached to him, and was actually looking forward, with well nigh as great an anxiety as Thalia, for the time when she would have, in the person of Kerry O'Toole, a stalwart young grandson to look after her. Shilrick, too, had won the favour of Thalia's grandmother, and joyfully she would welcome the little drummer when he found time to visit her, and while seated opposite to her, on a low settle by the hearth, he would listen to her tales of bygone days, while she would delight, in turn, to hear the young campaign's accounts of military exploits and adventures. Albeit, poor Shilrick had to talk at the whole pitch of his voice, Granny Coghlan being, as she said, "a thrifle dull o' hearin'."

"I belave 'tis earlier bhack from Bray I am, this avenin', than I thought I'd be," said Thalia. "But I'll soon be at the bridge now, where Kerry promised to mate me."

She had not gone many steps farther, before she encountered Captain Annesley, who was going his rounds, attended by Sergeant Smith, some of the outposts at which guards were placed being on the other side of the moor.

"Is that you, Thalia Coghlan?" exclaimed Annesley, in astonishment at seeing her at that hour, so far from her home. "You are alone this evening. Where is Kerry?"

"Sure, I was to mate him at the ould bridge beyant, yer honour," she replied, curtseying to him, "an', as it's before me thime, I am, I'd no call to hurry on me road; but 'tis gettin' dark very fast this night."

"Indeed it is, Thalia," said Annesley. "Are you not afraid to be out on these lonely roads after dusk? There are so many of the Rebels about just now, and they are wild, lawless men. It is not safe for you."

"Sure 'the Bhoys' wouldn't be harmin' mesilf, yer honour,"

she answered. "Maybes 'tis a milithairey gintleman like yersilf they might interfere wid, but not a poor colleen. 'Tis only the liberthy for their blissid counthry they're afther sakin'; an' Heaven help thim if 'tis in the right they are!" she added, solemnly.

"Liberty!" exclaimed Annesley, sadly. "Oh, Erin! Erin! mine own dear country! Will the curse of the one fatal fancy that haunts the minds and the hearts of our people, never cease to rest on thy beloved hills? Will the cloud never break that darkens thy beauteous shores? Oh! the fatal mistake that keeps thy brave sons ever in arms, thy fair daughters ever in tears!"

"Oh, yer honour!" answered Thalia, sorrowfully, "may Heaven grant that betther days may dhawn; for sure there's many sad hearts in the ould counthry this night, an' 'tis said there's worse thimes comin' for us yet!"

"It will always be so, while there is rebellion in our land," returned Annesley, "and while the demon of discord between two opposite parties continues to spread desolation around. 'A divided household cannot stand,' and such is the position of poor old Ireland at this moment, such has it been for centuries. Ah, Thalia!" he added, earnestly, "you may indeed be thankful that your lover does not join the Rebels, or any of the secret societies that have been the ruin of hundreds of our countrymen."

"Sure, yer honour, 'tis Kerry would niver be a Rebel or a thraitor," said Thalia, proudly.

"I trust not, Thalia," replied Annesley. "I always hope to find my foster-brother loyal and true. But now I must bid you good-night. I am on duty as Captain of the day, and have yet to visit some of the outlying posts."

"Come, sergeant," he called to the orderly who accompanied him. "We must be on the march again."

"Yes, sir!" answered the sergeant, saluting Annesley as he approached him.

"The top av the avenin' to yer honour!" said Thalia, as she curtsyed respectfully to the Captain.

"Good-night, miss!" cried Sergeant Smith, as he passed her.

"Save ye kindly, sergeant! Sure, 'tis his honour the

Captain that's the fine young gentleman, an' he's kind an' fair-spoken enthirely, it's no wondher that Kerry an' Shilrick think so much av him," said Thalia to herself.

"An' what is it ye're sayin' about mesilf?" asked a merry voice, as Shilrick O'Toole approached Thalia, and laid his hand on her shoulder.

She had not seen the drummer advancing towards her, for the mist was now very dense, and he had come upon her suddenly, while she was talking to Annesley, but had remained in the background until he saw the Captain and Sergeant Smith disappear in the opposite direction ; being particularly desirous of having a private conversation with Thalia, he seized upon this as the best opportunity that could possibly present itself.

"Sure, Thalia, *colleen machree*, 'tis glad I am to mate ye now. I thought ye'd be comin' this way. It's mesilf has somethin' mighty particular to say to ye about Kerry," said Shilrick.

There was an anxious tone in the boy's voice, that made Thalia look up with a troubled expression in her face, as she asked, quickly :

"Something to say about Kerry, Shilrick, *ma bouchaleen* ? Tell me. What is it ? Oh ! sure, there's no harm come to *him*, at all, at all ?" she cried, earnestly, and clutching Shilrick's arm suddenly, in her terror and anxiety for what might have befallen the lover whose welfare and happiness was her constant thought by day and by night.

"Och ! aisy now, Thalia !" he exclaimed, "sure, it isn't pullin' the arm aff av me ye'd be ? Troth ! it's the big sthart ye gave me, annyhow. No, darlin', there's no harm come to Kerry yet, that I know av, but I'm feared there's throuble on the road, an' sure, *that* always does be thravellin' fast enough."

"Oh, Shilrick ! what is it ye mane ?" asked Thalia, her face, which but a few moments before was bright with hope and happiness, now pale as death with fright and anxiety. "What is it ye fear ?"

"Not that your love for him is growin' cool, annyhow," replied Shilrick, laughing, and rubbing his arm vigorously. "Troth ! it's yersilf has made me *fale* that enthirely. But,

Thalia," he added, more seriously, "I did think wanst that somethin' must be wrong betwane yersilf an' me brother, for Kerry has ofthen samed so sthrange widin the last week or two, so gloomy, an' wid the dhark cloud on his brow, an' agin whiles, whin I'd be talkin' to him, I'd find out he'd heard sorra word that I'd been sayin'. Wanst, whin I was spakin' av yersilf an' yer love for him, he looked at me wid a sthrange light in his eyes, and said, wid a world av throuble in his voice, 'Thime will show, Shilrick, *ma bouchaleen*, thime will show.' But oh, Thalia," continued the boy, earnestly, "sure ye'd niver be false to Kerry? I tould him so; but he niver answered. If I could only find out what it is that's wrong wid him. Thime afther thime I've sane him wid a cut-throat lookin' bhoy, that they say has come from America—worse luck to him for lavin' his counthry, if harm's to come to Kerry through him! No doubt it's the Americans that were glad to get rid av such a craythur, an' sint him over to us. Annyhow, if he *isn't* as big a blackguard as iver set foot in a dacent, honest counthry, 'tis his face spakes a mighty great ontruth about him."

"But, Shilrick, what *can* he want wid Kerry?" asked Thalia, wonderingly.

"He's afther some divilry that ye may thake yer oath," replied Shilrick. "I belave he belongs to the Rebels, maybes he wants Kerry to be joinin' thim. Annyhow, whin-iver I see Kerry now, 'tis that ould snake-dhraver av a Yankee isn't far away."

"Oh, Shilrick! what *can* we do, at all, at all?" cried Thalia, anxiously.

"That's just what I wanted to spake to yersilf about this avenin', Thalia," said the boy, looking at her as if he would read every thought that was in her heart. "Sure, ye'll always be thrue to Kerry in word an' dade?"

"Faithful an' thrue ontill death!" was Thalia's earnest reply.

For a moment Shilrick hesitated, and stood gazing thoughtfully at the distant hills, the dim outline being all that was now visible through the vapour that was fast rising around them. At last he once more turned to his companion: "Sure, it isn't thrue what I've heard about Sheymus Malloy an' yersilf, Thalia?" he asked, anxiously.

"What have ye heard, Shilrick?"

"That he's moor wid yersilf than he nade be, that's all," he replied, gravely. "Moor than might be plasin' to Kerry."

As the boy's searching eyes watched Thalia eagerly, he saw that she changed colour, and appeared agitated. When he spoke, she suddenly remembered her promise to Sheymus Malloy. But for that promise, she would have explained all to Shilrick, and would so have saved them both much misery in the future. Now, however, she spoke with some impatience, being indignant that he should doubt her good faith towards Kerry.

"Sure, Shilrick, how daur ye be spakin' that way to mesilf, when ye know well that 'tis Kerry's love is the light av me life? Oh! Heaven help me, if iver I were to lose that light, for it's the dhark cloud av sorrow that would be over me heart for the rest av me life enthirely."

"Ah, well, Thalia! sure *I* belave ye're in earnest, annyhow. Don't kape up the anger agin mesilf for spakin' av this. Ye know 'tis Kerry's happiness I'd be anxious about, an' I thought it best to give ye the word av warnin'. Don't be havin' too much to say to Malloy; have a care, *avourneen!*—sure ye may have known Kerry all yer life—but for all that ye *don't* know—ye couldn't have the guess what the bhoy is whin he's roused."

"I've niver yet wronged yer brother in thought or word," replied Thalia, angrily; "an' there's no wan in the whole world—not aven Kerry himsilf—that has the call to be thinking I'd be onthru to him."

"Sure I was only givin' ye the warnin'," said Shilrick, hotly. "There's somethin' throublin' Kerry's mind. That much I know. I've the right to thry an' find it out, an', bedad, I will too! If it's nothin' wrong betwane yersilf an' him, then it must be that blackguard, called Magin, that's at the bottom av it all."

"I'll ax him about the American, Shilrick, the first thime I see him, which will be this very avenin'," replied Thalia. "Maybes he'll tell mesilf what dalins he's had wid him."

"Now, Thalia, I must be marchin'," said Shilrick. "It's gettin' late. I've a message from wan av the officers to a friend

that's sthayin' wid Squire O'Shaughnessy. It's a long distance, an' as I couldn't be back in barracks beforeattoo, I got lave for the night, an' I'm goin' to sthay wid Kerry. The officers like meself to go their messages, bekase I know the roads so well an' can find the way asier than anny av the other souldiers. Come, Thalia, I'll go wid ye as far as the place where ye're to mate Kerry. 'Tis the ould trystin' spot, I suppose—the bridge?" he asked.

"Yes, Shilrick!" answered Thalia, "an' it's gettin' nare the thime he'll be there."

"Give me the baxket, I'll carry it for ye! 'Tis empty this avenin'!" he observed.

"Sure, an' it is," she returned. "'Twas good luck I had this dhay. Granny will be plased to see the handful av *cronagh-bawns*, I have for her. An' there's the good news for Kerry as well. There's somewan at Bray that's promised to thake all the flowers I can get for thim, an' give me rigular paymint ivery wake."

"That's good hearin' annyhow," said Shilrick, cheerfully, as they proceeded on their way to the old bridge where Thalia was to meet Kerry.

Little did the drummer think of the sorrow and trouble in store for both, ere he again set eyes on the brother to whom he was so devoted, or of the place and the circumstances in which he would then find Kerry. Little did Thalia dream that when she next met Shilrick, the boy's bright, honest face would be turned from her in the coldest displeasure, the bitterest contempt and enmity.

Coming events, it is said, cast their shadows before them. Surely it was the shadow of coming trouble that had stolen from Thalia's fair face all the bright hope and happiness of the morning. She continued on her way with Shilrick in silence, and truly the mist from without seemed to have found its way to the hearts of both.

CHAPTER XII.

“ Erin ! loved land, from age to age
Be thou more great, more famed, and free,
May peace be thine, or should'st thou wage
Defensive war, cheap victory.

May plenty bloom in every field
Which gentle breezes softly fan,
And cheerful smiles serenely gild
The home of every Irishman ! ”

JAMES ORR.

We must now return to the “ Shamrock,” where we left Kerry O'Toole watching Morven O'Neill making a hasty exit through the window, so that the men then so peremptorily demanding admittance should not see that they had been in confidential conversation.

As soon as Morven had disappeared among the trees in Mrs. Kinahan's garden, Kerry quietly unlocked both doors, and called to those waiting outside to enter, at the same time carelessly seating himself on the side of the table nearest the window, so as to conceal the view of the garden as much as possible for a few moments, until he was certain that Morven had fairly made good his retreat. He twirled about his shillelagh in a half-defiant manner, and there was a look of gravity and determination in the dark gipsy face, an ominous glitter in the eyes, that would have been ample warning to those who knew Kerry best, to have a care how they crossed him in any way.

“ Och, come in, bhoys ! come in ! sure there's room for all in Misthress Kinahan's illigant parlour ! ” called Kerry, coolly.

"To think, now, that it's yersilves I'd be kapin' outside the dures all this thime," he continued, looking innocently at the men, as both doors being now burst open they came crowding into the room.

"The top av the avenin' to ye, bhoys! Magin! is that yersilf I see? Sure 'tis mesilf thought I'd mate yez here, an I knew it's Mrs. Kinahan had the wish to kape the room for 'the Bhoys,' an' bein' first here, I've been after kapin' it empty until ye'd come."

"Dash it!" cried Magin, angrily. "Don't be trying to come over *me*, with yer cussed nonsense, O'Toole. I guess I know ye're after some mischief." Then, turning fiercely to Mrs. Kinahan, he asked, "What do yer mean, mistress, by keepin' myself an' all these 'ere gentlemen out all this time, because Kerry O'Toole was inside, eh?"

"Sure, Mither Magin," began Mrs. Kinahan, in a tone intended to be conciliatory, "how could I be tellin' whether it's Kerry that's a frind to ye, or no. Troth 'tis mesilf wouldn't like to be the manes av yer losin' annywan that might be afther joinin' '*the cause*,' d'ye see," added the wily widow, in a lower tone, and in a manner to convey to the Yankee that it was *his* interests she wished to study. "But sure it's sorry I am, if I've displased ye."

"Sure we thought maybes ye wouldn't like annywan to see ye, bhoys, onless thim that belongs to the cause," chimed in Anty, with a praiseworthy idea of helping her mother out the difficulty.

"Troth, it's a clever colleen ye are, Anty *avourneen*!" said Owen Maguire, who had followed the men into the room, "sorra doubt but ye did it for the best." Owen crossed the room to Anty, glad of any pretext that would give him the chance of being near her. Mrs. Kinahan in spite of all her present anxiety and trouble found time to cast a withering glance at poor Owen, which might have proved as annihilating as she desired, but for the fact that, at the moment, his head was bent close to Anty's ear, into which he was whispering tender words of love, and making up for lost time on previous occasions.

"Wa'al, mister!" said Magin, again addressing Kerry, "I guess you airn't a particklar safe guest. Suppose now yer

just makes tracks out of this 'ere room, an' don't come in again till ye're invited."

Magin folded his arms, and placed himself in a defiant attitude in front of Kerry. There was an insolence about his look and manner, that would in other circumstances have roused all the latent fire and passion in the hot-headed young Irishman, but, in this instance, Kerry was determined to be present at the meeting and to hear all that Magin had to say in the speech with which he was about to astonish more than one among his audience. With this object in view, therefore, he contrived to subdue the rising tempest within him, and turned again to reply to the Yankee's curt and hospitable observations.

"Sure it isn't turnin' me out ye'd be?" he asked, innocently. "An' wasn't it yersilf axed me to attind wan av yer matin's, that I'd hear what ye had to say to the other bhoys about the cause? Thim's the words ye said, and niver a lie in it, at all, at all."

"Wa'al!" said Magin, after a few moments' consideration, "I guess *I* don't mind, if the other bhoys air agreeable."

There was a murmur of assent from some and dissent from others among the select assemblage, of the latter it suited Magin to take no notice. It had long been his wish to implicate Kerry in their treasonable plots, and he thought he now saw an easy way of drawing him into the meshes he had been so diligently, but cautiously, casting around his unwary feet, and from which it would be difficult, if not impossible for Kerry to extricate himself.

"I suppose ye'll not be wantin' annythin' *moor* av Anty an' mesilf jist now?" asked Mrs. Kinahan of Magin, being anxious to return to her household duties, and still more so, to withdraw Anty from the proximity of Owen.

"No! I reckon not, mistress," replied the Yankee; adding with characteristic politeness and elegance, "I guess we don't want gadding women an' gals at our meetin's."

Mrs. Kinahan bestowed on the incorrigible Magin a look of the most profound contempt as she swept past him, and catching hold of her daughter's dress, she pulled her along with her, turning, as she was going out at the door, to say in a voice loud enough for Owen to hear, "You come with

me, Anastasia ; sure if Owen Maguire has the thime to be idle an' amusin' himself, *you've* no call to be followin' his example."

With a final toss of her head, and one last crushing look at Owen, the widow retreated, pushing Anty in front of her, but not before the mischievous, high-spirited girl had contrived to bestow a nod and a most reassuring smile on her lover.

When Mrs. Kinahan and her daughter had left the room, and the door was closed after them, one of the Irishmen, called Sheil Casey, approached Kerry, and putting his hand on his shoulder, asked the significant question :

"*How does yer heart bate this dhay, me bhoy?*"

"*Thruë to the Green!*" replied Kerry.

"Sure he knows the password, annyhow," said Owen, eagerly, he being delighted at the thought of O'Toole joining them, knowing that he had always been warmly attached to the O'Neills, and seeing in him another faithful friend for his master.

"Is it wantin' to join us ye are, Kerry?" again inquired Sheil Casey, with some suspicion in his tones.

"Sorra bit," answered Kerry, shortly.

"Then what do yer want to stop here for?" asked Magin.

"Bedad! haven't I tould ye that I want to hear what ye'd be sayin' about this movement, an' I'll tell ye me mind on it, whin I've heard what it is ye're after, sorra wan av me knows yet."

"Ye'll give yer promise not to bethray us, Kerry?" asked Myles Lenigan, anxiously, as he came up to him.

"Is it yersilves think *I'd* turn *informer*?" inquired Kerry, indignantly.

"No, no, Kerry, sure I can answer for *that* annyhow, responded Owen, warmly.

"Wa'al!" said Magin, condescendingly, "I guess yer may be allowed to stop this time, mister, an' hear the speech that's to be made by *me*. Thar airn't no doubt but yer'll be tempted to join us when yer've heard it. So now take yer seats, boys, an' I'll straightway commence. I'll lock the doors first though, I calc'late, it's best allus to be on the safe side."

While Magin was locking the doors, the men took their places, either seating themselves, or standing about in various positions. As we have said, all the Rebels were not at that time supplied with uniform, and even had they been so, they would not have worn it on such an occasion, the consequence being that a more incongruous or motley crew were surely never before assembled together. There were Sheil Casey, Myles Lenigan, Tim Callaghan, Phelin O'Flanigan, Andy Rafferty, and many other Irish Rebels, in every stage of well-to-do respectability and of ragged poverty. There was Andrew McNaughton, a canny Scot, and several of his countrymen, in whom Morven O'Neill placed considerable confidence, for their fathers had fought for Scotia's darling, "Bonnie Prince Charlie," and had been proved leal and true. Now, after many years, the sons of those brave men had been roused at the recital of the wrongs of Ireland, and they still retained a grateful remembrance of many a kindness shown by the Irish to refugees from Scotland in her troublous times.

There were several Englishmen present, who from some fancied wrongs had joined in the rebellion against the British Government. There was Silas Charleston, an American friend of Magin's, and a few other select followers, hailing from across the Atlantic. Felix Thibaud, and two or three volatile and excitable Frenchmen ; Heinrich Bruhm, and a few stolid, heavy-looking Germans ; Guilielmo Focione, and his dark-eyed, hot-headed Italian followers ; one or two graceful, languid and exceedingly lazy Spaniards ; and two cunning, avaricious-looking Greeks ; the former occupation of one of these crafty gentlemen—it was whispered—had been that of Brigand, while the other had followed the precarious and daring calling of Pirate of the High Seas. In fact there were amongst this promising assemblage, rogues, vagabonds and adventurers from many countries, each one having about him some characteristic article of attire, and presenting altogether a strange and fantastic picture as they gathered around the table, or stood in groups about Mrs. Kinahan's homely room. Unfortunately, it was from no real love of Ireland that most of these waifs from foreign parts had landed on the shores of the Emerald Isle ; in truth they were little

better than vultures, waiting on the rocks of expectation, to prey upon, and, if possible, to make a harvest out of the troubles and sorrows of Erin, and the credulity and open-handed generosity of those who favoured "*the cause*," and seemed ready even to impoverish themselves, for the sake of the country they loved so well.

Avarice, greed, and cunning were the expressions written on the faces of many of those assembled to listen to the address of Thaddeus Magin that evening ; but there were few who could surpass him in craft and treachery, few who were more unscrupulous.

These foreigners, attached to O'Neill's band of Rebels, with whom this story is more immediately concerned, were but a small party of the vast numbers of human birds of prey who had landed in Ireland, and were thus doing their best to raise rebellion, to foster discontent, and to desolate the country with the horrors of civil warfare and bloodshed.

"Now !" commenced Magin, as he took up his position at one end of the long table, and gave that unoffending piece of furniture an emphatic blow with his club-stick. "Now, my friends and brothers, I guess we hev met here this afternoon to expatiate on the great and uncommon advantages of this 'ere movement, an' to speak of the blessin' of a free country to all of yer. I'd hev yer think, gentlemen, of the pleasures of each of us seated in this ere room of Widow Kinahan's to-day, wakin' up to-morrow to find himself the owner of a neat piece of ground and an elegant house of his own, to do what he likes with, not to mention a couple of spry cows and a tidy pig or two dropped into the bargain : airn't that a refreshin' pictur', boys, eh ?" (Enthusiastic applause.) "What d'yer say to it, O'Toole, eh ?" he queried, turning to Kerry, who was standing near him.

"Why, that I'll take yer hand, now, at wanst, an' give ye the blessin' wid it !" was the quick reply. "If," and the speaker paused, and looked searchingly at Magin, "if ye'll be afther tellin meself and the other bhoys what we'd be doin' to get all thim things ye've mintioned, the illigant houses, an the cows an the pigs. An where they'd be to come from, at all, at all."

"Hevn't I told yer often enough that yer've got to fight for them? Hevn't they been taken from yer?"

"Lord help me!" said Kerry, with a sigh, "*I niver had none av thim fine things yet, nor me father before me nayther, barrin' one illigant pig at a thime.*"

"No!" cried Magin, with a withering look of contempt at his audience generally, and at Kerry in particular, "no, because ye're too mean-spirited to fight for yer rights like men, an ye're all such darned dunderheads that there airn't no makin' one of yer understand anything. But, let us continoo, gentlemen. I guess yer know well enough how many brave boys are now pinin' away in English prisons; noble warriors of the Emerald Isle, basely deprived of their land an' their liberty, because they *scorned* to be trodden under foot by another country."

This last sentiment being received with unanimous cheers by his hearers, Magin was encouraged to proceed, with more vigour than before.

"Because they bravely determined to claim the soil that was their own by natur'. But I reckon we'll have them out boys!" striking the table with his stick. "I say we'll have them out," (renewed cheers,) "and then when they return, when we hev the voices of those devoted boys to swell the chorus; I calc'late, friends we'll give three cheers for Ireland, an' Irish Nationality!" (Great applause.) "I guess I needn't speak of the blessin' of perfect liberty to all of yer, but to gain this, we must conquer England. Already, this 'ere movement that's been set on foot, is our first step towards sweepin' away the monarchy; our next will be to raise an army by our own efforts, an' proclaim war with England" (cheers). "I guess England will hold back, my friends an' brothers, but never mind *that*, it'll only show off her weakness; an' that her glory is fast fadin'." (Applause.) "We shall hev the satisfaction of seein' the fallen ruins of the Throne and the Monarchy, at the feet of the Irish people. *The People, boys!* The honest, hard-workin', trampled-under-foot people! The bulwarks of the Irish nation, the mainstay of Old Ireland." (Enthusiastic applause.) "Gentlemen! I call upon yer now to hold an' maintain yer noble aspirations and sentiments of '*Ireland for the Irish.*' Let *us* be the men to stand by

the right ! Let us stand by the Harp and the Shamrock ! We must let no object come in our way, we must blow up Magazines, Barracks, Forts, Government Offices, Public Buildin's, all an' everything, an' rescue Ireland from bondage." (Loud cheers). "I guess, gentlemen, yer'll consider that it's from no self-interest I come to assist yer. I'm almost a stranger in this 'ere locality. I make an' allarmin' sacrifice—comin' over to this country, instead of stayin' to look after the 'Stars an' the Stripes.' I tell yer that America makes a sacrifice when she allows me to be here ; but a country in trouble allus commands my help." (Applause.) "An' I calc'late I'll stay till I've fixed Ireland all square for yer, an' if nothin' else, I may be able to put yer in a way of doin' for yerselves an' of makin' this a free country." (Cheers.) "We'll make a *Republic* for ourselves, boys ! an' we'll sing with one heart an' mind—'Up with the green flag ! down with the mean red flag ! The Irish Republic for ever !'"

At this point in Magin's speech the applause was rather faint, and there appeared considerable discontent and uncertainty on the faces of many of his hearers ; nothing daunted, however, the incorrigible Yankee continued his elevating discourse.

"Now, I guess there's one thing I hev to speak about." Here he paused, and looked slowly round the room, out of the corners of his eyes, which seemed to emit a lurid, malevolent light, as if craftily taking in the expression on the face of every man present, and carefully calculating the effect his words might have upon his hearers, a very few, however, of whom had the slightest idea of the awful significance of the pernicious advice, and the treasonable sentiments of the villain Magin ; they scarcely understood what he required of them—they certainly could not have told what they themselves wanted, had any one of them been asked to explain their grievances. It is such men as Thaddeus Magin who disturb the peacc of whole nations, rousing the people to discontent and rebellion, sowing the seeds of discord that they know, only too well, will take root, grow, and flourish, and, in the end, yield a bitter harvest of misery and mourning throughout the country ; but it matters not to them what others reap, for *they* contrive to gather sufficient spoil, ere

the storm breaks that is to prove the destruction of so many of their innocent victims. Fortunately, the want of cultivation in the case of Thaddeus Magin, the vulgar egotism, the overbearing manner, and exaggeration of facts, of this would-be leader, robbed his seditious words of half their power and mischief ; and, as he continued his intellectual oration, a faint glimmering of his real intentions and motives began to dawn in the minds of the more intelligent, and sharp-witted of the Irishmen, among his audience.

"Don't any of yer put too much faith in yer young Captain, O'Neill."

"Och !" angrily shouted several of the Irish Rebels simultaneously. "Not wan word agin the Captain !"

"If ye daur say an ill word av *him*—av Misther Morven," cried Owen Maguire, threateningly, "begorrah ! it's yersilf that'll repent it enthirely."

"Thru for ye, Owen !" said Kerry.

There was an indignant murmur of dissension amongst the men, which was again interrupted by Magin.

"Wa'al now, don't excite yerselves, boys, that's allus the way yer work yerselves up, so that yer airn't fit for calm reflection. But, as I was sayin', Captain O'Neill has a tar-nation deal too many grand notions for us."

"An' who wouldn't have grand notions if not an O'Neill ? small blame to him !" said Owen, proudly.

"Why, certainly !—That's so," answered Magin. "But then, yer see, he'd like Ireland to be an Independent Kingdom. He'd like to have a King, and Home Rule. I guess *I've* a better notion than *that*. Why would yer be such cussed fools as to bother yerselves with a King at all ? Then yer spry young Captain has another notion, he wants the old landlords back agin."

"An' so do we !" cried several of the Irish Rebels, "ivery sowl av us. Long may they reign ! Good luck to the ould nobility an' the ould ways !"

"That's very good, misters ! but I calc'late I've got a better idea than that," said Magin. "What do yer say, now, to perfect equality, with no landlords to bother yer—no rents to pay, each one of yer assembled here to-day the master of his own acres of land ; I guess that would be tar-

nation pleasant now, eh, boys? Then yer could all do as yer liked; plant potatoes an' work the ground, or else do nothin' an' live like gentlemen." (Applause.) "Ah! I thought that would give yer satisfaction; I guess the most of yer would take to the doin' nothin' employment, like ducks to the water. But, to continue—then we'd all be brothers an' equals." (Some murmurs of discontent.) "Not one of yer with an acre, or a cow, or a pig more than the other. An' after I hev fixed all that for yer, why I reckon we'll set about takin' *England* an' makin' London a part of old Ireland." (Enthusiastic applause.) "An' then!—why, boys, I guess I'd become Guv'nor of London."

"Niver!" cried Sheil Casey, rising hastily from his seat. "Why should ye be settin' *yersilf* above ivery wan, to be Guv'nor, I'd be for axin'?"

"Sure 'tis the sorra wan I'd be allowin' to put themsilves before me, annyhow!" said Myles Lenigan, in an excited voice, from another part of the room.

"Faith, it isn't mesilf that'll be kept out av the position!" chimed in Phelim O'Flanigan.

"Wa'al now, gentlemen! considerin' I spoke first, I hav a notion that *I've* the best right to the appointment," answered Magin, coolly.

"Tis yersilf that'll niver be Guv'ner av London, as long as *I* live to dethrone ye; an' what for would the likes av yez be Guv'nor whin we're all to be brothers an' aquils, enthirely?" asked Sheil Casey.

"Thim's the same words he said a minute ago, an' niver a lie in it, at all, at all," said Myles Lenigan.

"Thru for ye, Myles, an' begorrah it's oursilves that'll hould him to the bargain," cried Phelim O'Flanigan.

"Besides, Misther Magin," continued Sheil Casey, "it's yersilf has mighty little av the thru Irish blood in ye forbye, bein' moor than half a Yankee."

At this Magin started up angrily, his face almost green with passion, his eyes gleaming with fury.

"Say that agin, mister!" he shouted, "say that agin', an' I guess I'll try the strength of yer crown for yer; now," he added, provokingly, "do oblige me by sayin' it agin!"

"Sure, an' I will say it agin, an agin, an as ofthen as it's plaslin to mesilf," returned Casey, defiantly.

"An' wanst for all," cried Lenigan, determinedly, "I tell yer, that no wan'll be Guv'nor av London, but mesilf."

"That's what ye'll niver be, while I'm able to be thakin' the situation ; if there's to be anny Guv'nor at all," added Casey, with some doubt in his tones.

"Let me see the bhoy that'll daur kape mesilf out av it," exclaimed Phelim O'Flanigan, threateningly.

During the foregoing conversation, and dispute, Kerry O'Toole and Owen Maguire had remained silent, but amused, listeners, each having the intention of hearing all that he could of Magin's plans and sayings, and reporting them in full, afterwards, to Morven O'Neill.

"I scorn to dispute the subject more, gentlemen, for it's I that am alone fitted for the office," said Magin at last. "Besides, I guess I hev the best right, consitherin' I first put the idea into yer darned ungrateful heads. I calc'late," he added, sneeringly, "it *would* be a caution to see any of *you* in such a position."

"Sure it's I that am jist as able as yersilf, Misther Magin," once more expostulated Myles Lenigan.

"Och sure ! the sorra bit are ye fitted for it, Myles, ye spalpeen !" was Sheil Casey's complimentary opinion.

"Thake that, me bhoy ! for callin' mesilf a spalpeen !" cried Lenigan, giving Casey a knock over the head with his shillelagh. "An' there's another for sayin' *I'm* not fitted to be Guv'nor," he added, repeating the blow.

"An' there's a frindly crack for intherest, my bhoy !" returned Casey, as he waved his shillelagh threateningly before Lenigan, and then brought it down smartly on his shoulder.

Owen Maguire here crossed the room to speak to Kerry O'Toole, and after a few moments' whispered conference they were proceeding together towards the door, but were stopped by Magin, who stood before them and barred their progress. They had intended going to find O'Neill, as he was the only one likely to be able to quell the riot which seemed inevitable, and the consequences of which might prove most disastrous, should it be heard by any chance passers on the road,

or any of the military pickets who were kept constantly patrolling the neighbourhood.

Magin immediately guessed the intention of Kerry and Owen, he had no wish for O'Neill's appearance on the scene, and, indeed, he now secretly anathematized himself for having spoken so freely before them, knowing that both were devoted to the interests of the young Captain, though the former had not yet taken the oath of fidelity to "*the cause*."

"Not one of yer, gentlemen, leaves the room till this ere little matter is settled," cried Magin, determinedly, as he stood with his back up against the door, defiantly waving his club-stick before them.

"Whoo!" shouted Lenigan, aggravatingly trailing his shillelagh in front of Casey, with a peculiar expression on his face, and a significant gesture, well understood by his opponent.

"Whoo—oo—oo!" was Casey's reply, in a strange, lingering tone.

This well-known challenge was as gunpowder thrown upon a blazing fire; it was a signal for a general fight, the other men immediately taking sides, trailing their shillelaghs, throwing up their caubeens, loosening their neckerchiefs, and turning up their coat-sleeves. Tables and chairs were overturned in the midst of the uproar. Magin remained standing at the door, mockingly encouraging the combatants as they passed him, but being especially careful to keep out of the fight himself.

"That's right, boys!" he shouted, "show the spirit that's in yer, and defend yer rights like men."

"Troth 'tis mesilf thought 'twas '*Ireland for the Irish*,' ye said we were to be afther fightin' for, Misther Magin!" chimed in Owen, mischievously.

"An' so he did! That's thrue for ye, Owen Maguire!" cried two of the Irishmen who were in the thickest of the fight, and who, as if to give additional force to their words, once more charged their opponents with renewed vigour.

"Aisy, bhoys! aisy, now!" cried Kerry, who was, however, himself looking eager to join in the fight. "Sure,

hadn't ye betther be afther waitin' till ye've got London first, bafore ye fight about bein' Guv'nor av that same?"

Kerry's advice was certainly to the point and resembled that given by the priest to a couple in a certain parish in Ireland, whom he found having a serious dispute concerning where a chest of drawers was to be placed in their room. On further inquiry, however, his reverence discovered that this article of furniture existed only in the imagination of his two excited parishioners, and that the possession of it was very "far in the hazy distance," and would only be attainable when they had made "an illigant fortune enthirely." The priest, on this occasion, was able, fortunately, to restore something like harmony between these two ruffled members of his flock by pointing out to them the desirability of first making the fortune, then purchasing the chest of drawers, and, finally, arranging in which part of the room it was to be placed. It is not so easy, however, to quell a real, genuine Irish fight, and at that moment none of the Boys were in a humour to listen to the remonstrances of Kerry and Owen, and, indeed, it must be owned that their advice was but half-hearted after all, as both were, evidently, only too anxious to join in the general *mêlée*.

It has often been a wonder to observers, how an Irish fight is got up in a few moments. Two men, perhaps, commence with some slight dispute, words are followed by aggravating gestures and quick blows. Then dozens of other excited men appear on the scene of action (who seem, as it were, to start out of the very earth) take sides and join in the combat, many of them scarcely knowing what was the original cause of the quarrel; while often a trivial dispute between two men terminates in a desperate faction fight.

At the moment when Kerry spoke, the voices of Mrs. Kinahan and Anty were heard outside the door,

"Will ye let us in, boys, this minute!" called the widow, peremptorily, through the keyhole.

"Sure, if ye don't, it's mesilf that'll be afther goin' for some wan that'll make ye give up," chimed in Anty, in support of her mother.

Kerry, who had been literally trembling with excitement

and anxiety to be in the midst of the "shindy" was unable to resist any longer, especially as Owen Maguire had yielded to the temptation and was then seen in the thickest of the fight.

"Hurrah, for ould Ireland! and the thrue blood for iver!" he cried, as rolling up his coat sleeves, and waving his shillelagh, he rushed in among the combatants.

By this time Morven O'Neill had been made acquainted with the proceedings in the widow's parlour, and his voice was heard outside the door calling in loud and commanding tones to the Rebels within.

"Open the doors, boys! Do you hear me? I command you to open the doors!"

The men, however, seemed neither to hear nor to heed the orders of their Captain, but continued fighting more fiercely than before. Some of those belligerents who had lost their shillelaghs in the scrimmage, tore the legs off the tables and chairs, and continued to use them as formidable weapons. Morven, after shouting, commanding, and threatening in vain, shook the door violently, and at last burst it open, when it fell into the room with a crash, knocking down Magin and others who chanced to be in the way at the moment. Taking no notice of Magin's vindictive glances at him, as he slowly gathered himself up and stood before him in a defiant attitude, Morven O'Neill entered the room, followed by Anty Kinahan, who was in the greatest possible anxiety lest Owen Maguire should have been injured in the fray.

"What means this disgraceful noise and uproar?" demanded Morven, as he stood in the midst of them, looking cool, calm, and dignified. "Can I not be absent from you for half-an-hour without a dispute and a fight ensuing? Casey! put down that chair, this instant. Lenigan! pick up that table. Shame on you, boys. Magin!" he added, turning to the Yankee, "I should scarcely have imagined that *you* could be present and make no attempt to put an end to such a scene."

"Wa'al!" replied Magin, with an insolent look at O'Neill, "suppose *you* try to stop those thar boys now, mister."

"Sure it's mother that's comin' to look afther ye, boys, an'

she'll have ivery sowl av ye turned out this minute, if ye don't sthop fightin'," cried Anty Kinahan ; then, seeing her lover at the other end of the room, she crossed over to him and seized hold of his arm, bringing him to a sudden standstill, in the midst of a mad career round the room, "Owen ! —*Owen, aghra !* Give up ! Ah, be aisy now darlin' !" she added, anxiously, as he broke from her, and continued the fight with a powerful looking opponent, hailing from the neighbourhood of Donnybrook.

Neither Anty's entreaties, however, nor Morven's commands had for some minutes the least power to stop them. At last, however, they met with an unexpected interruption in the hasty entrance of the widow Kinahan, with a long broom in her hands ; nothing daunted at the sight of the desperate faces, and the fierce gestures of the men, she rushed into the thickest of the fight, and flourished her broom about amongst them to such good purpose that she succeeded in separating a few of the combatants.

"Give up, I say !" she cried, "or sure it's mesilf that'll have ivery mother's son av ye handed over to the authorities, for disgracin' a dacent, honest widdy woman's house."

"Do you mean to attract the notice of any persons who may chance to pass this way, boys ?" asked Morven, angrily. "They will soon discover our whereabouts, with all this noise. Can you never settle *anything* without a fight ?"

"'Tis sorra bit av use spakin' whin the bhoys' spirits is raised, yer honour," said Anty.

"Och ! the good luck be wid yer honour," said Kerry, as he stopped fighting, and for the first time noticed Morven. "Troth, I'm feared it's yersilf that'll have a power av trouble wid thim bhoys."

Having got the best of it in the fight, Kerry now generously turned to assist his opponent to rise, that gentleman being still seated on the floor, vigorously rubbing his head, and declaring that "he was murdered enthirely," but coming to life again immediately on hearing Kerry's proposal to "settle the thrifle av a difference fair an' aisy over a dhrop of the craythur."

Several of the other men still continued fighting, despite the expostulations of O'Neill, but were finally separated by

another bold charge into their midst, on the part of Mrs. Kinahan, with her formidable household weapon.

"How daur ye!" she cried once more, her comely face now crimson with anger and excitement, her cap having become disarranged and hanging by one string half-way down her back.—"how daur ye, bhoys, to be after behavin' that way, an' creatin' a disthurbance in a respectable house, an' mesilf a lone widdy. Give it up, bhoys, this insthant, I tell yez!"

In the general confusion no one noticed the pale, terrified face of Estelle O'Neill, as she stood gazing in at the window, having hastened there in her anxiety to know the cause of the sudden uproar in Mrs. Kinahan's well-ordered hostelry, and her fears concerning Morven's safety.

So ended the important meeting in the "Shamrock." We leave the reader to judge how far Magin's speech had been of advantage in elucidating matters relating to the "great cause." Certainly, if it had done no good, it had done little harm, as "the boys left the room no wiser than when they entered"; and indeed the words of the Yankee were soon forgotten in the shindy which ensued, and in which many of the men seized upon the opportunity for settling private disputes of long standing, quite unconnected with the important political subject they had been called together to discuss.

CHAPTER XIII.

“ Has Hope, like the bird in the story,
That flitted from tree to tree
With the talisman’s glittering glory—
Has Hope been that bird to thee?
On branch after branch alighting,
The gem did she still display,
And, when nearest and most inviting,
Then waft the fair gem away ? ”

MOORE.

Romantic, and very beautiful was the spot chosen by Kerry O’Toole and Thalia Coghlan for their trysting-place that summer night. The old bridge, with the deep water rushing over its rocky bed far beneath ; the surrounding hills and rugged mountains down which flowed many a seething, foaming torrent, all formed a scene of impressive grandeur. The bridge was supported on either side by rocks, in which were natural, roughly-hewn steps leading down to a road over-shadowed by trees, and bordered with masses of brambles, broom and ferns, and here and there clusters of the bright-blue *myosotis*, with its sweet symbolical meaning, “ Forget-me-not.”

The water beneath the bridge was known to be deep and dangerous ; more than one life had been lost there on dark stormy nights, when some unwary pedestrian had been swept over into the torrent, and had perished before aid could be obtained. Since then, however, an attempt had been made at some slight protection in the form of a rustic railing, but that would have proved a frail barrier against the sudden fierce gusts of wind that came sweeping down the mountain gullies with such terrible force.

When Thalia and Shilrick first arrived at the bridge, the scene was shrouded in darkness, save for the pale, golden light of a solitary star, which only appeared to lend a still more weird and fantastic appearance to the shadows that fell upon the old bridge and its surroundings. Thalia and her gallant though youthful escort, climbed up the rocks by the rough steps on to the bridge, where they stood for some moments in silence, gazing into the water beneath, both being apparently in deep and anxious thought. At last Shilrick spoke, and there was an expression of awe in his earnest, thoughtful eyes, as he looked around.

"Sure, Thalia, it's lonesome enough here, annyhow! How is it that Kerry an yersilf came to choose such a place av matin'?"

"I like it, Shilrick," replied Thalia, "I like it bekase 'tis here I've so ofthen been wid Kerry. An' whiles when I'd be here before me thime, an' waitin' for himself, I've niver felt lonesome, at all, at all; for I've always had the bright thought av the happy matin's we've had on this same ould bridge."

"Well, Thalia," answered Shilrick, "sure if it's yersilf that's contint, I've no call to be puttin' ye out av concate av the place. I'd have chosen a livelier trystin'-place, mesilf, though," he added. "I must lave ye now, or I'll niver be afther gettin' me message done this night. The top av the avenin' to ye, Thalia jewel!" he said, as he set down the basket beside her, "an' a happy matin' wid Kerry."

Thalia, who had been standing leaning against the railing of the bridge, and silently watching the lonely star shining just above her head, suddenly turned, as Shilrick was about to leave her, and laying her hand on his shoulder once more questioned him anxiously.

"Shilrick, what is it ye think *can* be wrong wid Kerry? Is it that he doesn't care for mesilf now as he wanst did? Oh, sure it isn't *that*?" she cried. "Sure, there's no other colleen come betwane us?"

There was a wail of sorrow and trouble in the girl's sweet voice that might have cast all doubt of *her* sincerity out of Shilrick's mind, had he not been so anxious concerning the happiness of his brother; but it is a sad truth that when once

the deadly poison of suspicion and mistrust is instilled into the heart, it is difficult—nay, too often impossible, to exorcise it.

Shilrick, however, was too warm-hearted and generous not to sympathize with *anyone* in distress, much less the girl who was so dear to Kerry, and whom he himself now looked upon as a sister. All the chivalry in the boy's nature was roused by the sight of the sad face before him, and it was with hopeful, pitying words he tried to soothe Thalia.

"No, Thalia—there's no other colleen; ye may kape yer heart aisy on that head. 'Tis your love is the sunshine av his heart—an' oh, Heaven forgive ye," he added, earnestly, "if ye'd iver do, or say annythin' that would bring the dark sorrow down on it."

With a long, lingering look at his companion, he turned and left her, and running swiftly down the rough steps at the end of the bridge, he wended his way along the lonely road, and was soon lost to view in the dense shade of the trees and rocks that surrounded him.

Little did the drummer think how, or where he would next see Thalia Coghlan. Was it a presentiment of coming evil that caused the lad to pause on his way, more than once, as he murmured, regretfully, "'Twas a dhreary place to choose, annyhow. I wish I hadn't to lave her. I wish I could have sthayed until Kerry came." Shilrick did not look round as he left Thalia—for that would have brought the bad luck—so the boy did not see the pale anxious face, as she stood, with hands tightly clasped, and eyes strained as they peered into the dim distance, striving to penetrate the darkness that hid from her sight the path by which her lover would approach; truly the poor girl appeared a solitary, mournful watcher, with the shadows of coming sorrow and trouble gathering slowly and surely around her, even as they were gathering around many another brave, true heart in Erin's Isle that night. Thalia was at length roused from her fit of despondency by the first roll of the drums, the commencement of the evening tattoo in Glencree Barracks. The distant tones of the drums and fifes seemed to soothe her, as the lovely, pathetic notes of the old Irish melody, "*Gram-achree Molly*," fell upon her ear.

She carried her basket to that part of the bridge where the parapet was lowest, and seated herself on a projecting piece of rock. When the last notes of the melody had died away on the night air, Thalia, partly because the music was still haunting her, and partly to while away the time, commenced in a low, sweet voice to sing the following words to the old air that had just been played on the drums and fifes :

“ The Harp that once through Tara’s Halls
 The soul of music shed,
 Now hangs as mute on Tara’s walls,
 As if that soul were fled,—
 So sleeps the pride of former days,
 So glory’s thrill is o’er,
 And hearts that once beat high for praise,
 Now feel that pulse no more.

No more to chiefs and ladies bright,
 The Harp of Tara swells ;
 The chord alone that breaks at night,
 Its tale of ruin tells :
 Thus freedom now so seldom wakes,
 The only throb she gives,
 Is when some heart indignant breaks,
 To show that still she lives.”

While Thalia had been singing, the moon had been gradually rising, and now shone forth from among the clouds with unusual splendour, the whole scene being etherealized beneath its wondrous light.

Thalia rose from her seat and stood once more gazing in the direction whence she expected to see her lover appear, but as yet there was no sign of his approach.

“ What *can* be kapin’ Kerry so long ? It’s gettin’ late,” she murmured, anxiously. “ Sure, I wish he’d come. Oh ! why is it that Shilrick would be puttin’ the sad thoughts an’ the doubts into me heart ? But if Kerry would only come now, an’ I could see the dear face av himself, they’d soon be gone. Oh, Kerry ! *shule, shule agrah, mavourneen !* ”

Thalia would have been still more anxious both on Kerry’s account and her own, had she guessed that he had been detained at the meeting of the Rebels in the “ Shamrock,”

and that he had been for the most part of the day in the select company of Thaddeus Magin, who had not neglected to make the best of his time in the way of using every effort to rouse the demon of jealousy in Kerry's heart, against Sheymus Malloy. How far the Yankee had succeeded in his nefarious design the reader has yet to learn.

The lonely watcher on the bridge was roused from her anxious reverie by the sound of a friendly voice behind her and turning to see who was the intruder, she found Sheymus Malloy was beside her, having approached from the opposite side to that on which Kerry was expected to appear.

"Thalia, me colleen, sure ye shouldn't be here yer lone so late this night," said Sheymus, kindly. "What is it Kerry's thinkin' av, at all, at all, to be afther kapin' ye waitin' this way?"

"And what call is it *you* have to be afther interfarin' wid what Kerry might be doin' or not doin', Sheymus Malloy!" demanded Thalia, indignantly, and in eager defence of her absent lover. "Sure it isn't yersilf that has the right to be castin' doubts on the bhoys. He's doin' no wrong, annyhow," she concluded, triumphantly.

"Thalia!" said Sheymus, rather taken aback at the sudden outburst from the usually quiet, gentle girl. "Sure I meant nothin' agin Kerry; only—only, 'tis afraid I am for yersilf bein' alone this night, bekase some of the 'Bould Bhoys,' are out, an' there's jist been another disthurbance, betwane the Rebels and the milithairey, a shoort disthance from Bray. Maybes 'tis Kerry has been in the middle av it."

Singularly unfortunate was Sheymus in his remarks on this occasion. First he had aroused Thalia's indignation, and now he had put her into a state of terror and anxiety for Kerry's safety.

"Oh, Sheymus!" she exclaimed, "sure, ye don't mane that annythin' has happened to *him*? Oh, tell me! Tell me at wanst what ye know! Oh! Kerry, me darlin', me darlin'! sure, there's no harm come to yersilf!" she cried, despairingly.

"Troth, Thalia! I didn't mane to be afther frightenin' yersilf," said Sheymus, much distressed at the reception of his innocent remarks. "I didn't mane to frighten ye, *cora*

machree, but, sure, ye know that there's niver a fight annywhere near an' Kerry not in it, an' small blame to him. But now, Thalia," he added, kindly, "ye'll let me thake ye safe home, an' then I'll be afther goin' in search av Kerry."

"Sure I thank ye, Sheymus, but I'd rayther wait; I promised Kerry I'd mate him here, an' if I'd to sthay all the night in this place I wouldn't be breakin' me word to himsilf."

There was a decided tone of coldness in Thalia's reply, not unmixed with a certain defiance, that was exceedingly aggravating, even to the good-natured Sheymus, and there was, therefore, considerable bitterness and reproach in his answer to her.

"An' ye've all that love for *him*, and sorra kind word for mesilf, that would give me life to make ye happy? An' where's the bhoy now, that he'd be sthayin' away so long, an' niver givin' a heed to yersilf waitin' and watchin' for him?"

"An' haven't I tould ye moor than wanst that ye've no call to be meddlin' an' passin' yer remarks on what Kerry does," said Thalia, angrily.

"Sure, 'tis the love I have for ye makes me do it, Thalia."

"Ye promised ye'd niver spake av that agin, Sheymus."

"An' so I did, darlin'; but troth whin I'd be seein' yersilf there foreninst me, I forget all enthirely but the love that's in me heart. I'm goin' now, Thalia jewel, but I'll not be far away in case ye fale lonesome, an' Kerry doesn't come," said Sheymus, kindly.

"But he *will* come, I tell ye!" cried Thalia, indignantly. "I know he'll come, *for he promised*."

While Thalia and Sheymus are talking so earnestly together, Kerry O'Toole, who has been hastily approaching, by a narrow pass among the rocks leading into the road which was more generally used; he suddenly paused and looked at the two figures on the bridge.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, his face pallid, his eyes blazing with passion, and his hand fiercely grasping his shillelagh, as he stood watching his unconscious rival and Thalia.

"There they are, an' togither agin. It's thrue—it's thrue—ivery word that Magin tould me. But take heed, Sheymus

Malloy, take heed—ye'll fale my vingeance yet !” he cried, passionately. “ The revinge of the O'Tooles is sure and swift.—Oh !” he continued, despairingly, “ why did I give the best love av me heart to a colleen like that ? I've sthriven' an' worked for her—I've given all I had—there wasn't a thought or a hope in me heart, an' hersilf not a part in it, but now—now I've bartered all, I've wrecked me life's happiness—all for a worthless bauble. Ochone ! tis Fate that's niver been over-ginerous to mesilf, but now she's come wid both hands full av sorrow. I'll watch thim,” he continued, passionately, again looking towards the bridge. “ I'll watch thim—here behind this rock. 'Tis little they think who is a witness to their lovemakin' here this night.”

Meanwhile, Sheymus Malloy and Thalia, continued their conversation, quite unconscious of the jealous watcher who was so near them.

“ Thalia,” said Sheymus, earnestly, “ sure dear, it's mesilf that knows well ye'll niver tell Kerry, or annywan ilse, what's come an' gone betwane us ; an' now I want ye to promise that if yer heart should iver be sad wid the dark sorrow an' throuble, or if ye should iver have nade av a faithful friend, it's to mesilf ye'll come. Put yer two hands in mine, Thalia darlin',” he added, tenderly, “ an' promise that ye'll not forget.”

“ Sure, I'll promise, Sheymus,” Thalia answered, solemnly, as she frankly did as he desired, “ an' I thank ye for all yer kindness to mesilf.”

“ Ah !” cried Kerry, as he looked round the projecting rock, “ see that now ! How she lets him hould her two hands. Oh, the false-hearted colleen ! begorrah ! may I niver die in sin if I don't pay ye for this night's work, Sheymus Malloy.”

“ Heaven bless and kape ye from all ill, darlin', now an' for iver !” was the fervent wish of Sheymus, as he parted from Thalia.

She stood watching his retreating figure for some moments, and then, with a sigh, she murmured, sadly, to herself, “ Poor Sheymus ! sure it's the kind heart he has. I wish he had niver cared for mesilf, for he might have found some other colleen that would have been proud av his love.”

CHAPTER XIV.

"If thus the young hours have fled,
When sorrow, itself, looked bright,
If thus the fair hope hath cheated,
That led thee along so light;
If thus the cold world now wither
Each feeling that once was dear;
Come, child of Misfortune, come hither,
I'll weep with thee, tear for tear."

MOORE.

For a moment Kerry hesitated, as he looked up at Thalia; then, coming from behind the rock, he quickly ascended the steps, and stood on the bridge.

"Thalia!"

"Oh, Kerry!" cried the girl, joyfully, as she turned, on hearing his voice, and hastened towards him, "is it yersilf at last, dear! Sure 'twas a shtar ye gave me, enthirely; but, faith, 'tis glad I am to see ye, darlin'."

She had gone up to him quickly, with eager, outstretched hands, but suddenly drew back on seeing the cold, stern expression of his face, and that he remained sullen and silent as he stood leaning against a rock at the end of the bridge, with his arms folded, and looking down at her scornfully.

"'Tis mesilf, sure enough," answered Kerry, bitterly. "The top av the avenin' to ye, Thalia Coghlan! But maybes it's I that am rather onwilcome jist now—maybes a thrifle before the thime I was expicted."

"Kerry *mavourneen*!" exclaimed Thalia, surprised and hurt at the coldness of his manner, "why, what is it that's the matther wid ye, at all, at all!"

"Matther enough, I'm thinkin'," he replied, angrily. "What was Sheymus Malloy doin' here, an' where was he goin'?"

"Doin', is it?" exclaimed Thalia, indignantly. "Sure, he was spakin' to mesilf; an' I'd like to know what ye have agin' Sheymus Malloy walkin' on this or anny other road that's plasin' to him; but since ye ax the quistion, why, thin it's goin' home, he was."

"Faith thin, it's a mighty great number av different ways av goin' home he has enthirely; most av thim in opposite roads from where he lives," replied Kerry, sarcastically. "An' mind ye!" he continued, passionately, "this is the fifth matin' I've seen betwane yersilf and him; I'd been tould about it many thimes, but sure I'd niver belave annythin' agin yersilf ontill afther I'd sane what was goin' on, wid me own two eyes. An' what was Sheymus sayin' to ye *this* thime, Thalia Coghlan?" demanded Kerry, sternly, as he approached nearer to her and laid his hand on her arm. "What was he spakin' about the thime he had yer two hands clasped in his, an' the love-light shinin' in his eyes?"

"Sure, there was nothin' agin yersilf bein' said, Kerry," replied Thalia, angrily, "an' nothin' that could harm ye at all at all, that ye'd be spakin that way to me."

"Oh, Thalia!" cried Kerry, in tones of bitter sorrow and reproach, "sure I belaved ye to be thruth itself. I'd niver thought ye'd decave me. Ye'd betther—far betther, have come to me at wanst, an' said 'Kerry, 'tis another bhoys I love moor than yersilf now,' an' sure it's mesilf that would niver have kept ye to yer ould promise, niver, though 'twas to break me heart enthirely to give ye up to another."

"Kerry *asthore*—what is it ye mane," asked Thalia, anxiously. "Och! sure it isn't jealous ye are, Kerry, darlin'," she added, as she coaxingly laid her hand on his, which was still holding his shillelagh in a tight, passionate grasp.

Kerry stood looking down on her with an expression half scornful, and half sorrowful; he made no attempt to return the gentle, caressing touch of the girl's hand, and simply repeated in the same obstinate tone as before, "Tell me, what is it that Sheymus Malloy was sayin' to ye this night?"

"I—I can't, Kerry," was the hesitating reply. "An' sure, how would I be remimberin' ivery word the bhoy said? Oh, Kerry!" she continued, earnestly, "sure ye can trust me, darlin'—ye niver disbelaved me before—why would ye be doin' it now?"

"How daur ye be afther thryin' to decaive a bhoy that loves ye betther than all the world?" cried Kerry, passionately, as he pushed aside her hand. "*Oh, colleen machree!* sure ye may live to regret playin' wid a thrue, honest heart, an' then throwin' it away when ye were thired av it—thramplin' it ondher yer faat as if hearts had sorra moor falin' widin thim than the sthones ye're sthandin' on this minute. I'm goin' now" he added, sorrowfully. "I'm goin' to lave ye, Thalia. Ye'll maybes niver see me agin, or if we *do* mate in the far-off future, it'll be as sthrangers."

"Oh, why d'ye say that, Kerry *avourneen*," cried Thalia, weeping bitterly. "Sure it isn't goin' to lave me ye are?"

"I'm goin' to join the 'Bould Bhoys' in the mountains," was the cold, stern reply, "maybes in their company I'll be able to forgit the colleen who seemed so fair an' yet proved so false. I'll thry to forgit how I wanst loved ye, an'—are ye listhening, Thalia?" he demanded, angrily.

"Oh, Kerry!" sobbed Thalia. "Sure I'm listhenin'. Heaven have pity on me for havin' to hear such cruel words from the bhoy I love moor than life!"

The man continued his reproaches relentlessly, too much blinded by passion and jealousy to notice the sorrow-stricken look on the face of the girl he so dearly and so truly loved, or to hear the ring of truth in her voice as she pleaded so earnestly to him.

"Now, maybes ye'll hear the name av Kerry O'Toole among the Rebels, an' that he's the most darin' av thim all. Maybes ye'll hear that he's imprisoned in Wicklow Castle. *Then*," he continued, fiercely, *remember*—yes, remimber, Thalia Coghlan, to tell that *he* was yer ould, swateheart, an' that it was yersilf made him thurn *thraitor* an' dhrove ivery good thought out av his heart enthirely."

He was moving away from her, but turned, suddenly, and put his arm round her. For a moment the storm-cloud seemed to have vanished from the grave, handsome face,

leaving nought but an expression of deep, yearning sorrow, and the dark eyes that gazed searchingly into Thalia's were full of the tenderest love.

"Thalia!" he said, with emotion, "one last farewell I must spake, for the sake av the ould love I had for yersilf. Farewell, *ma'vourncen*! Heaven protect an' kape ye, an' make ye thruer to yer second love than ye've been to yer first. Farewell, Thalia *cora machree*!"

He gently withdrew his arm from around the weeping girl, and with a sad, weary gesture he passed it over his troubled eyes.

Once more he was about to leave Thalia, but in an instant she was at his side, her hands clasped round his arm, entreatingly.

"Kerry! Kerry!" she cried, passionately, "won't ye be-lave me? Won't ye listhen to me? Oh, darlin'! sure ye'd niver lave me this way? I've niver wronged ye in word or dade, I niver meant to decaive ye. Oh, Kerry *agrah*! ye'd niver do what ye said this minute? Sure, if yer own father an' mother had been livin' now, they'd rayther hev sane ye lyin' could an' sthills at the foot av that dape wather, than that ye should have thurned thraitor an' joined the Rebels: an' there's the Captain, yer foster-brother, an' little Shilrick, too, 'tis loyal an' thrue they are. Oh! Kerry, think av *thim* if ye care nothing for mesilf now!"

Again the demon of jealousy and anger got the upper hand of Kerry, and the softness, the tenderness, were all gone; he was utterly mistaken in the motive which, in his indignation, he attributed to Thalia, as the reason for her speaking as she had just done.

"I thank ye for the hint, Thalia," he replied, fiercely, "'tis rid av me enthirely ye want to be. Maybes 'twould be inconvanient for yersilf to have the bhoys ye'd wronged so near hand, he could tell others how onthru ye were. Sure 'tis all as wan to mesilf now what becomes av me. I naden't sake revinge on the bhoys that's won yer heart from me; the sorrow an' throuble will come to him soon enough, for the false heart brings no luck wid it to the giver or the recaiver. Farewell for iver, Thalia, and take the best wishes av yer ould love wid ye wherever ye may go." After

a long, earnest look at the pale, frightened face and trembling form, he added, in a low, sorrowful voice as he pointed significantly to the water beneath the bridge, "I'll not want yer love anny moor, Thalia—I'll niver fale yer couldness *there*."

With a quick, sudden movement, Kerry put Thalia aside, passed her, and reaching the centre of the bridge was about to leap over the parapet, but she ran forward, and falling on her knees at his feet clung to him in terror and despair. As if to lend additional horror to the scene the moon was at this moment eclipsed by a passing cloud, and the darkness around the two figures was dense.

"Oh, Kerry! Kerry!" cried Thalia, piteously. "Sure ye wouldn't do this dade. Oh, Kerry *asthore*—me own—me only love! Sure ye couldn't do it at all, at all!"

"'Tis av no use thryin' to kape me back, Thalia," replied Kerry, shaking her off. "Let go av me, I tell ye, let go!" he cried, fiercely.

"No, no, Kerry!" sobbed Thalia, still clinging to him, her despair seeming to give her additional strength. "No, no; oh, *mavourneen! mavourneen!* won't ye listhen to me?"

"The thime's gone past for listhenin' and thrustin'," was the passionate reply, as, breaking from Thalia's hold, Kerry leapt over the bridge, into the torrent below.

"Sheymus! oh help!—help!—Come to me, Sheymus!" cried the terrified girl in her despair, and the cry found an echo among the rocks and caves around, and went to the very heart of the man who believed himself to have been deceived.

With a low, heart-rending wail of sorrow Thalia was about to follow her lover, but a quick, firm step was heard, and in an instant Sheymus Malloy had climbed the steps at the end of the bridge, and stood behind Thalia, only just in time to place two strong hands upon her shoulders and to draw her firmly, though gently, back from the parapet, over which she was leaning.

"Thalia!" exclaimed Sheymus, in a voice full of reproach. "What's the matther? Sure, it isn't goin' to drown yersilf ye were?"

"Oh, save him! save him, Sheymus!" cried Thalia, wildly.

"Save who, Thalia ? Who is it ?" asked Malloy, wonderingly.

"It's Kerry ! it's Kerry ! Oh, save him !"

"Kerry O'Toole, is it ? But, sure, how did he come there ?"

"Oh !" cried Thalia, "why will ye sthand there spakin' to mesilf when *he* is dhrownin' ? D'ye hear ? he's *dhrownin'* ! an' ivery moment is av consequence."

"Och ! sure he's safe enough, Thalia, he can swim."

"Yes, yes, but he'll not thry—he'll not thry," sobbed Thalia. "Oh ! hear to the torrent, it'll drag him ddown—drown," she continued, wildly—"he'll be swept far away out to the dape sae, we'll niver see him anny moor. Oh, Kerry !—*acuishla machree* !—my darlin'—my darlin' !"

"But, Thalia, my colleen, sure I don't ondhersthand—Kerry hasn't been thryin' to dhrown himself ?" asked Sheymus now utterly bewildered with Thalia's grief and excitement.

"Oh, Sheymus !" replied Thalia, despairingly. "If there's anny heart widin' ye at all, don't be axin' annythin' now. If ye love me as ye said—if ye have anny mercy, oh ! thry to save him, an' Heaven bless ye ! *only thry to save him* ! " she cried as she knelt at the feet of Sheymus, and clasped his hands in hers in passionate entreaty. "Only thry to save Kerry, an' sure it's mesilf that'll say 'yes' to the quiston ye've axed me so manny times. I'll thry an' love ye as ye want, Sheymus, if ye'll save *him*, an' kape him from dyin' wid this dark crime on his sowl."

"Thalia, *mavourneen* !" said Sheymus, tenderly, "I can do nothin' wid ye clingin' to me like that ; let go, dear, an' I'll see what can be done."

"An' ye'll save him, Sheymus ?" asked Thalia, hopefully, as she rose, and stood facing him, an irresistible pleading in her voice and her sorrowful eyes.

"I'll thry, Thalia. This is a dangerous part an' I can't swim well mesilf, woorse luck. The torrent is mighty sthrong; it'll be hard, but sure I'll vinture it. Kape up yer heart, darlin' !"

It was indeed a daring venture on the part of Sheymus Malloy. He was not, as he said, an expert swimmer, and even had he been so, there was but little chance of his being

able to make use of his skill, for there were many dangers attending such an attempt. There was the risk of being caught in the torrent and dashed against the rocks, or else swept out to sea, or into one of the many rocky caves past which the water rushed. There were dangerous currents, too, and pools into which it was said that if anyone fell they would never again be seen, dead or alive, by mortal man.

All these dangers and difficulties, however, had no weight with Sheymus Malloy. He was naturally brave and fearless. For a moment only, he paused, as the thought crossed his mind that it was a hard task that was set before him, that he should thus risk his life to save his rival, and one, too, who, by his own act, had placed himself in such peril; but his indecision did not last long; the generosity of the man's nature prevailed, combined with his love for the sorrowing girl beside him. He hastily crossed the bridge, and, after throwing off his coat and hat, he began cautiously to descend to the water, clinging from rock to rock, intending if possible to reach a rugged peak that projected over the water, from whence he could look down and see if Kerry was anywhere in sight, and from which it would be easier for him to leap, than from the bridge.

"O! Heaven help an' save thim both!" cried Thalia, fervently, as she leant over the parapet to watch the movements of Sheymus, but the hope that had sprung up in her heart, was destined soon to be turned into bitter despair, for at that moment the moon once more shone forth from behind the cloud, and revealed to the terrified girl that the projecting rock which Sheymus had now reached, and to which he was clinging, was loose, and that it was trembling and shaking beneath his weight. "Oh!" she cried, "the rock is givin' way—he's losin' hould av it—'tis all over wid thim both. Oh, Kerry, my heart's darlin'! an' Sheymus, my brave, throe-hearted friend. Oh, wirra! wirra!"

The last words had scarcely crossed her lips before the rock fell, with a loud, thundering sound into the water beneath, and was immediately immersed in the seething foam from the torrent. Sheymus had now disappeared as swiftly and as completely as Kerry.

Thalia, wild with terror and grief, and scarce knowing what she was doing, leant too far over, and too heavily against the rustic railing of the bridge ; it gave way, and, the parapet being low, she fell over. Her hopeless, despairing cry, which was borne away upon the night air, was the only sign of the terrible tragedy that had been enacted on the old bridge.

Once more silence reigned—a cloud crept over the moon, and all around was shrouded in darkness.

CHAPTER XV.

"As a beam o'er the face of the waters may glow,
While the tide runs in darkness and coldness below,
So the cheek may be tinged with a warm, sunny smile,
Though the cold heart to ruin runs darkly the while."

MOORE.

Jealousy, suspicion and love held a place in the heart of more than one of those present among the group assembled on the colonnade outside the officers' quarters at Glencree Barracks, the same evening as that on which the tragedy was taking place on the old bridge, and, indeed, at the very same hour.

The scene, despite its martial surroundings, would have appeared calm and peaceful enough to a mere casual observer, who could not read the care and anxiety written on the faces of several of those now gathered together in, apparently, friendly intercourse, and who knew not of the elements of discord and unrest that existed within their hearts, though every emotion was so carefully and successfully concealed beneath the veil of outward courtesy and the cold, conventional Society smile. The group consisted of several of the officers of the Marines and two or three friends belonging to the cavalry regiment, who had been dining at Glencree Barracks, and were now walking to and fro in front of the officers' quarters, where they had been attracted by the sweet, pathetic tones of "*Gra-ma-chree, Molly!*" even as poor Thalia Coghlan had been soothed by them while keeping her lonely tryst on the bridge.

Eveleen Corrie was seated at the open window of the Colonel's quarters, with the faithful Nap curled up on the

end of her dress. Opposite to her was her great friend, Lady Mabel O'Hara.

Mrs. Corrie and another elderly lady were reclining in easy-chairs near them, now and then taking part in their conversation, while the Colonel and Major Ricardo of the cavalry detachment were seated at the table, engaged in an eager discussion on military and naval matters, with two officers, from the ships in Bantry Bay, who were to remain for the night at Glencree.

Outside the window, leaning against the frame-work, stood Lieutenant Rochfort, (the young cavalry officer before mentioned) eagerly bending forward to speak to Eveleen Corrie, watching, admiringly, the ever-changing expression on her fair features. Lieutenant Digby was engaged in a mild flirtation with Eveleen's friend, the Lady Mabel, Annesley and Ellis were walking to and fro, conversing together, occasionally pausing to make a passing remark to those at the window.

From time to time Annesley cast angry and scornful glances at Eveleen and Rochfort, which glances the latter returned with cool insolence, for, in his own mind, and in his overweening vanity, this gallant son of Mars imagined that he was perfectly irresistible, and that he could never in any circumstances, be otherwise than master of the situation in aught appertaining to love affairs. Fortunately, however, for his own self-conceit, he could not read Eveleen's heart, and knew not how she was hiding her bitter sorrow at Annesley's coldness beneath a forced gaiety of demeanour, nor that her seemingly willing and pleased acceptance of Rochfort's attentions was but to hide from the former the real state of her feelings.

Little thought the young Dragoon that, while he was diligently pouring soft love speeches into Eveleen's ear that she sometimes scarcely heard one word that he was saying, for her eyes were following Annesley's every movement, even as her thoughts and her heart were with him then, and would be as long as life lasted ; but Rochfort was perfectly satisfied. He had rehearsed those love speeches and gone through similar scenes so often with others, and had always found them effective and successful, that he was quite convinced that the impression left thereby, on the mind of

Eveleen Corrie, would be all that even *he* could possibly desire, especially as he was, *this time*, fairly in earnest with his love-making.

Whatever might be Eveleen's reception of the advances of Rochfort, certainly that of Nap was the reverse of favourable, for, when that young officer leant too far inside the window, he was greeted with a low growl, Nap utterly refusing to be propitiated, his keen instinct probably telling him that although, before his mistress, his enemy made some pretence of speaking to him and attempting to win his favour, yet in secret he was anathematizing him, and thinking no fate too evil to wish for Eveleen's loving, faithful little friend, because poor Nap happened to have a particular liking for his rival, Annesley.

The coldness and estrangement between Annesley and Eveleen had in no way diminished since the night they had parted in anger, some days before ; indeed it had rather increased, for it is a well-known truism that when once jealousy and suspicion enter the lover's Eden peace is sure to depart, and, as our immortal bard has written :

*"Trifles, light as air,
Are, to the jealous, confirmations strong
As proofs of Holy Writ."*

The memory of Miss Ellen Desmond, and Annesley's supposed admiration for that most discreet and loyal-minded young lady, was still rankling in Eveleen's mind, while Annesley, on his part, had been unable to shake off his suspicion with regard to Eveleen's evident interest in the Rebels, and his jealousy was now still farther aroused by Rochfort's attentions to her, until, at times, he tormented himself with the thought that Eveleen had wished to pick a quarrel with him, and had taken the plan of seemingly favouring the Rebellion, well knowing that his determined loyalty and his duty compelled him to denounce all connected with treason. He did not seem, or rather did not choose, to notice that at times, the tender, loving eyes, so often watching him, were filled with tears, or that the pale lips, hidden behind the feather fan, were quivering with pain and sorrow. Even had he done so, it is possible that in his present state of mind he

would not have believed that Eveleen's grief was caused by his own neglect and coldness.

There had been silence, both within and without the room, for some minutes, each one seemingly busy with his, or her own thoughts. At last, Annesley's voice, as he spoke to Ellis, broke the spell. "I wonder," he said, "if it is my fancy, Ellis, or if there really *is* a difference in the tattoo to-night? I seem to miss the roll of Shilrick's drum."

"It is not fancy, I think, Annesley," replied Ellis; "the boy has a particularly fine touch, so firm, and yet so light. The Drum-Major says that it is a most difficult instrument to play well, but that Shilrick O'Toole is the very perfection of a drummer."

A smile of pleasure crossed Annesley's grave face; he was always glad to hear anyone speak in praise of his little favourite; but Rochfort, hearing the remarks of the two officers, looked after them, as they passed the window, with a peculiar cynical expression; then, turning to Eveleen, he spoke with a certain inflection in his voice intended to make his words appear the more significant.

"What a *very strong* interest Captain Annesley appears to take in that young drummer! Is there any *particular cause* for such a feeling, Miss Corrie?"

"Yes," she replied, coldly, "there *is* great cause. Shilrick O'Toole's brother, Kerry, is Captain Annesley's foster-brother."

"Ah!" said Rochfort, sarcastically. "Possibly that *might* be a sufficient reason; but of course *I* do not understand these sort of *extraordinary* relationships, you know, so can't quite sympathise."

"No, I suppose not," answered Eveleen, coldly.

"But, indeed," continued Rochfort, "the feeling between them seems more of affection than mere interest. The boy is made a regular pet and plaything, apparently, by the officers and men of his corps, too, and he certainly seems to have plenty of idle time on his hands, at any rate, and an extra amount of liberty, which is scarcely wise," he added, significantly, "for I should say he knows too much of the people and this neighbourhood. I saw him this very evening in the gloaming, far from barracks, careering over the coun-

try. I followed him for some distance, to watch where he went."

"Ah!" said Eveleen, with quiet sarcasm. "I understand. And were you successful in your self-imposed task of playing the spy?" she asked.

Rochfort might have been warned by the rising colour in Eveleen's face, and the contempt on that of Digby, who was still standing opposite to him, but his conceit always stood him in good stead and made him impervious to sarcasm; it was impossible for him to imagine that anything *he* might do or say could ever be considered wrong, or "bad form," which point in his character was well known to his own brother officers (by whom he was often styled "Rochfort the Immaculate") and his very high opinion of himself was soon discovered by others with whom he came in contact.

On this occasion he seemed determined to pursue the subject of Shilrick O'Toole, and the undue favouritism that *he* considered was bestowed upon the drummer by his corps in general, and Captain Annesley in particular.

"No, Miss Corrie," he replied, "I was sorry that I was obliged to relinquish my attempt to follow the boy; it was growing late, and he met some girl on the way with whom he went off. Possibly," he added, with a cynical smile, "he had some message for her, or she might be a foster-brother's foster-sister, or something of that sort, you know,—some one in whom *his Captain* might be interested. However, I could go no further; it was then time for me to come here, and," he continued, bowing low to Eveleen, "I am afraid in this instance,—I am thankful to say such a feeling does not often get the better of me—but in *this* instance, I followed the call of *pleasure* rather than of *duty*."

"Indeed!" replied Eveleen, with coldest displeasure in her tones, "I should scarcely have thought that *playing the spy* on soldiers of his own, or any other regiment, when they are out on leave, formed a part of Lieutenant Rochfort's duties."

"And, pardon me, Rochfort!" struck in Digby, unable any longer to restrain his indignation, "I should have thought you had quite enough to do to look after your own fellows, don't you know, without interfering with ours."

"Thanks, Mr. Digby," whispered Lady Mabel to him, "I am sure that Eveleen, as well as myself, will feel personally obliged to you for taking down the conceit of our cavalry friend."

Bright was the smile with which Digby received Lady Mabel's words, but she had, unfortunately, reckoned without her host with regard to Rochfort, for that young gentleman was by no means abashed; he turned to Digby with a cool, insolent bow, and replied :

"I stand corrected, Digby; but at the same time," he continued, with a sneering smile, that was most exasperating to the honest, straightforward young Marine officer, "at the same time, you must allow me to say that I consider it my duty to interfere if I see anything done that might endanger the cause of the Government, or of the King, whose commission I have the honour to hold, by preventing the military from gaining correct information regarding the movements of the people. Now, this boy—"

"Lieutenant Rochfort," indignantly interrupted Digby, "you have said enough. At present you are our guest, so I cannot answer you as I should wish. Permit me to add, however, that I think I can relieve your mind, by reminding you that the Marines have never yet been found wanting in truth and loyalty to their King and country, and I think you will find quite as much of both in *our* corps, as in *your* regiment. As for Shilrick the Drummer, he is true to the core."

"Well," said Rochfort, incredulously, "I hope you may find that he is so."

"Impudent young jackanapes!" murmured Major Ricardo to Colonel Corrie, both those officers having been amused listeners to the conversation at the window. "I wonder that young lad of yours did not tell him to go to the devil!"

"I do not think Digby would have been at all behind-hand in doing that," answered Colonel Corrie, smiling, "only you see, he was handicapped by the presence of the ladies and the thought that Rochfort was our guest."

That Rochfort hated Annesley with a bitter, undying hatred was perfectly apparent to all who knew them. He had determinedly put himself forward as a rival to the latter from the

time that he had been introduced to Colonel Corrie's daughter, and continued to honour her with his attentions, even though he saw that they were not especially welcome; to do him justice, however, he was not then aware of Eveleen's engagement to Annesley. His anger and jealousy were the more keen, when he found that all his blandishments had no effect upon Eveleen, and that he could make no advance in her favour. His vanity had been so desperately wounded that he was not likely soon to forget the one whom he considered the chief cause of his defeat. His hatred was extended to Shilrick, because the young drummer was a favourite of Annesley, and he knew that the boy was devoted to his Captain, while even poor little Nap came in for a share of this young officer's ill-will, on account of his having shown, on more than one occasion, a decided preference for his rival, and returned his own hostile feeling with interest. The silence that followed the dispute between the two officers was again broken by Rochfort. "To return to our former conversation, Miss Corrie," he commenced, turning once more to Eveleen, "I must say that your views regarding this rising are very pronounced, and indeed, actually *in favour* of the Rebels."

"No," replied Eveleen. "I do *not* favour the Rebels, or rather I do not approve of the means they are taking to gain the end they wish to attain; but I have said, and say again, that it seems to me horrible, the way they are being hunted down. If they have a regular rising, and you, the military, are called out to quell the disturbance, *that* is different, for there is then only fair, open fighting between you, man to man, but it is terrible the way you sometimes hunt them—like regular sleuth hounds."

"And if we are not to do this, in what manner do you propose to eradicate the seeds of treason, and to put down the Rebellion?" he asked, superciliously.

"Not by the means you are now using, certainly," replied Eveleen. "You are acting as if you were dealing with two hostile nations. You must not forget that, in this case, however much the one side may differ from the other, those connected with the rising, as well as those who are loyal subjects, are all fellow countrymen. The latter may have

friends, even near and dear relations, among the former, and they are right—yes, perfectly right—to shield those united to them by ties of kindred and country. You hunt the innocent as well as the guilty. You would even punish, or imprison, men or women, however loyal they might be at heart, because they would not be cajoled or bribed into turning traitors and betraying those who are nearest and dearest to them.”

“Unfortunately I cannot follow you there, nor can I sympathize with what *I* feel to be a mere matter of sentiment. As I have said before now I do not consider, that, in a case of such vital importance to the King I serve, and to the English Government, private feelings should be considered at all, but, at any rate, I wish the Rebellion was at an end and that we could leave this wretched hole of a country, and these treacherous people—they are hardly worth our powder and shot.”

“Thanks, Lieutenant Rochfort !” returned Eveleen, indignantly, “I fancy you must surely have forgotten that you were speaking to an Irishwoman.”

“And two other Irishwomen sitting near for witnesses,” chimed in Lady Mabel, briskly, indicating herself and Mrs. Corrie. “Sure you wouldn’t be leaving us out of the question, Eveleen, my dear ?”

“And with regard to your not understanding the feelings of our people,” continued Eveleen to Rochfort, “I can quite imagine that the love of kin and country, that is inherent in every Irish and Scottish heart, seems to have but little weight with *your* cold countrymen. But enough of this, I prefer not to discuss the subject with one who can find nought save abuse for poor sorrowing Erin, the dear land of my birth.”

What reply Rochfort might have made in excuse, or defence, of his uncomplimentary remarks upon Ireland, was not destined to be heard, for at that moment a man was seen hurrying across the barrack square, in evident excitement, who, on nearer approach, was discovered to be Jeremiah Stalker, the English patrol. He was followed closely by the orderly, who had been standing at the gate, but who found it incompatible with his soldierly walk and dignity, to attempt

to keep pace with Stalker's hasty and ambling steps, as he quickly made his way across the parade, and approached Annesley and Ellis, and, without delay, commenced to inform them of his errand.

"Please, sir, there 'ave been a murder, or a haccident, or su'cide, or some'at of that, somewheres near here, and I thought it my dooty for to come to the Colonel to give hinform-ation on the subjeck."

"Where was it that this murder, suicide, or accident happened, Stalker?" asked Annesley, while Ellis went to the window to call Colonel Corrie, who immediately hastened outside to hear all particulars.

"It were somewheres about that there hold bridge, near 'ere, sir," said Stalker, in reply to Annesley's question. "Leastways, that's what a chap I 'appened for to meet on my beat told me."

"But why did you not go to the place and see for yourself? You might have been able to render some assistance," said Annesley, impatiently.

"I didn't want for to make no delay in coming 'ere, sir," answered the patrol.

The simple truth was, that Stalker, being one who firmly held with the opinion that "discretion is the better part of valour," was in no way desirous of placing himself in danger without the protection of a party of stalwart, stout-hearted Marines. And he was afraid that, in the present instance, the disaster, about which he had heard such a garbled account, was but the forerunner of broken heads, and a faction fight.

"My good man!" said the Colonel, now addressing Stalker. "This is scarcely a matter for which you required to call out the military, and besides, you should have brought some reliable information."

"Did you give our fellows at the cavalry barracks, the honour of a call too, Stalker?" asked Rochfort, ironically. The patrol paused for a moment, ere he replied, then planting himself in front of Rochfort, and crossing his arms behind him, he regarded the officer, fixedly, out of the corners of his small pale eyes, his head very much on one side, and his nose taking an extra upward curve.

"No, sir," he answered at last, "I can't say as I did ; you see, sir, 'osses would 'ave been no use in the circanstances, an' I've 'eard as the cavalry wasn't no good without 'em."

Never had Lieutenant Rochfort been so taken aback before, or felt so flatly snubbed. He was the more angry as he saw the barely suppressed smiles on the faces of the other officers, and even Major Ricardo, in spite of Stalker's uncomplimentary opinion of *his* branch of the service, could scarcely restrain his amusement, for Rochfort's insolence was well known among his brother officers.

Eveleen was laughing heartily behind the shelter of her fan, feeling fully avenged for all Rochfort's sarcastic speeches concerning her countrymen. She, with Lady Mabel (who had been exchanging triumphant glances with Digby) and Mrs. Corrie, had now risen and were standing at the window, all being anxious to hear the news, and the cause of the patrol's sudden appearance at such an hour.

"I suppose," said Colonel Corrie to Annesley, "since this patrol has come here, we must send a small party of our men with him to see what has really happened, and render any necessary assistance ?"

"It will be best to do so, sir," replied Annesley.

"I won't say but you *'ad* best come ; they say as the young man as has been murdered or killed 'isself or met with a haccident, is that peppery, gipsy-lookin' young chap, as you takes such a hinterest in, and was in the Draggles (or whatever you calls the place, that there large deep ditch with the 'igh banks heach side and the trees a-growin' out of 'em) ; he 'ad a young 'ooman with 'im then, and I makes no doubt *she's* at the bottom of this 'ere lamentable hoccurrence."

In a moment it flashed across the mind of Annesley that the place so graphically and romantically described by Stalker was the Glen of the Dargle, and the next words of the patrol confirmed his suspicion.

"You'll remember, sir, there was a himpident, cocky young drummer there, and you come up and hinterfered with me in the discharge of my dooty ? The which,—"

"Ah !" exclaimed Annesley, suddenly, "I remember. Oh !" he cried in horror, "you do not mean that it is Kerry O'Toole—my foster-brother !"

"That's the chap, sir, leastways from what I can 'ear," replied the patrol, complacently, "but there, don't take on about the likes of 'im. I should say if so be as it *is* 'im that it's a subjeck for congrat'lation, for I believe as he was one of 'em wild sort that if he weren't born for to be drownded he was bound to be 'anged in the hend."

What might have been the result had Annesley heard the conclusion of Stalker's speech, it is hard to conjecture; but long before the patrol had done speaking he was on his way to his own quarters, and throwing around him his large military cloak he hastened to join the party of soldiers now assembled on the parade, in readiness to start for the scene of the disaster. "Oh, Kerry, Kerry!" he murmured, "what is it that has happened to you, my most unfortunate foster-brother? And Shilrick is absent; alas! what news for him on his return. Ah!" he exclaimed, suddenly, "I had forgotten, he was to have stayed with Kerry to-night. Where can he be now?"

Not once did Annesley glance towards the Colonel's window as he passed, so he knew not of the pale, anxious face, and the tearful eyes that were watching him depart; but it is probable that had Eveleen thought he was looking at her, she would immediately have assumed her former expression of cold indifference and scorn. Thus, the gulf of pride which had separated these two lovers, was widening day by day, threatening, ere long, to form an impassable barrier between them, that even time could not break down nor lessen. They were ruthlessly wrecking their life's happiness, as many others had done before them, and, alas! as many others will yet do as long as the world lasts.

And meanwhile, as time passed, onlookers were wont to comment upon the progress that Rochfort seemed to be making in Eveleen's favour; they knew not that it was a feeling of pique at the coolness of Annesley which caused her to receive the attentions of the young dragoon with more apparent pleasure than she would otherwise have done. A few of Rochfort's brother officers, however, inclined to the belief that Eveleen had discovered the better qualities in their comrade, which they imagined he really possessed, marred,

and hidden though they were beneath the outward vanity and very objectionable egotism of his manner.

There were even those in his regiment who could tell of many little kindnesses shown to his brother officers, when in trouble, or to the wives and children of some of the poorest of the troopers, and, moreover, one of these troopers used to tell his comrades that he would never have returned from his last campaign, never more have seen the dear ones at home, but for a certain dashing young cornet, then little more than a boy, who, under heavy fire of the enemy, paused to assist him when he fell, wounded and helpless, and, lifting him on to his own horse, gallantly continued on his way with this double burden, until he landed the wounded trooper in safety, and through all he had acted as coolly and calmly as if he had been at some regimental sports or tournament at home.

Many of the defects in Rochfort's character had been caused by his early training ; with a harsh step-mother, and an indifferent father, he was left almost entirely to the care and guidance of an old servant, who half-worshipped the motherless child, but who, at the same time, finding him neglected by others, went to the opposite extreme, and spoilt him with foolish flattery, and injudicious yielding to every boyish wish and caprice ; this pernicious course of treatment was, in a measure, continued by the ladies of the regiment, when Percival Rochfort first joined as cornet, a wilful, vain, and very good-looking lad, but withal something lovable about him.

Rochfort's supercilious manner, and the egotism before mentioned, won for him many enemies among his own sex, but, at the same time, he also had a few firm friends in the regiment. That this was the case may be gathered from the conversation of Captain Drelincourt and Lieutenant Saunders, two of his brother officers, as they were proceeding homeward from Glencree Barracks, on the evening of which the important events have just been related.

" I think," said Drelincourt, " that Miss Corrie might do worse than accept Rochfort. I hope she is not trifling with him, though," he added, thoughtfully, " for I believe the lad really cares for her, and he has not had a very bright, or happy life so far."

"You think that *Miss Corrie* may not be in earnest then?" asked Saunders, quickly.

"No. I don't say that," replied the other, "only I have fancied sometimes that she has appeared pre-occupied, and even almost impatient, when Rochfort has been pressing his attentions upon her."

"Well! some say, that Annesley, of the Marines, is an admirer of the young lady; if so, I should certainly advise her to choose *him*."

"That is because you never liked Rochfort, and never would believe that there is any good in him; but *I* am certain that, if any great opportunity occurs in his life, Rochfort will not be found wanting."

"Ah!" returned the other, "you are, for some reason or other, prejudiced in his favour."

"No," replied Drelincourt, "I am only just, and moreover, my opinion is shared by others."

"Well! every man his own opinion, say I;" answered Saunders, shrugging his shoulders significantly, "but it has always been a sort of riddle to me, don't you know,—'*find the good in Rochfort*.'"

Drelincourt remained silent for a moment, regarding the other curiously; at last he spoke:

"Why, Saunders! if I did not know the very excellent opinion you have of yourself, and of *your own* powers of attraction, I could almost imagine that you are *jealous* of Rochfort."

"*I jealous of poor Rochfort!*" exclaimed Saunders, sneeringly, "I should be glad, Drelincourt, if you would kindly inform me, what the deuce there is for *me* to be jealous of, in *him*."

"A great deal more than there is for *Rochfort* to be envious of, in *you*," replied Drelincourt, quietly, as he glanced at the somewhat coarse and sensual face of the man before him, and thought of the refined features and aristocratic bearing of his other young comrade. "You asked for my opinion, you know, Saunders, so I have given it frankly; but we will not discuss the subject farther; for here we are at your quarters, so I'll take my leave, and proceed to mine—yet stay!" he added, hesitatingly, as he paused at the foot of the

steps leading to Saunders' room, "I do not think you should deliberately run down Rochfort, or *any* of your own brother officers, to outsiders, as I continually hear you doing."

"Why?" demanded the other, shortly, "I suppose I have a right to express my opinions freely, if I choose, and say what I like?"

"Oh, certainly! *if you choose*; the costermonger has the same liberty and freedom of speech; but in *your* case, Saunders, it is decidedly 'bad form' to avail yourself of it. We are all so much together, that of necessity we see and know all each other's faults and failings, and *I* have always considered it a point of honour that both officers and men should do their utmost to uphold their comrades in the service, and especially those fellows belonging to their own regiments. It should be the effort of each one of us to maintain the honour and the prestige of his own corps or regiment. Military glory in the time of war is a grand thing, but it is also good, in the time of peace, to hear that our regiment is an honour to the service, and that it is respected and liked wherever it may be stationed. That is all I have to say. Good-night, Saunders!"

CHAPTER XVI.

"I saw from the beach when the morning was shining,
A bark o'er the waters move gloriously on ;
I came when the sun o'er that beach was declining,
The bark was still there, but the waters were gone.

And such is the fate of our life's early promise,
So passing the springtide of joy we have known.
Each wave that we danc'd on at morning, ebbs from us,
And leaves us, at eve, on the bleak shore alone !"

MOORE.

Shilrick O'Toole, having faithfully delivered the message from his officers to Squire O'Shaughnessy, then retraced his steps with all speed to his brother's shanty, thinking that, as it was so late, Kerry would certainly have returned home, after safely landing Thalia Coghlan with her grandmother. As he neared his destination, however, he was much surprised to see no signs of a light of any kind, and on going up to the door, he found that there was no one within.

It was a lonely shanty, without a trace of any other habitation near it, and surrounded by a wide, wild track of moorland, bordered by a range of purple hills and mountains.

Without, were most unmistakable signs of poverty, and when Shilrick lifted the latch and looked in, the interior appeared to afford but little evidence of comfort.

There are times when the best and most believing of us, must scarcely be able to help feeling how very unequally are Fortune's gifts bestowed in this world.

Kerry O'Toole was a young man of good, honest character,

leal and true in all his dealings ; he was, moreover, industrious, and might have been in comparatively comfortable circumstances, but for a series of the most trying misfortunes, bad seasons, and the continual ill-luck that seemed so persistently to attend him in every effort, and in every circumstance of his life.

For a time he had been fairly disheartened, and almost gave up striving against a fate so adverse ; it is probable that he might have grown callous and have taken to bad company and evil ways, but, from this, his faithful love for Thalia Coghlan had saved him, together with the *hope* that is inherent in the heart of every Irishman, be his trials ever so great.

“ It’s well it’s no woorse,” is a saying one often hears among them, even when it would appear that their lives are full of care and sorrow.

Of late, however, things had seemed to prosper more with Kerry, but he determined that, for a while at least, there should be no outward signs of an improvement in his fortunes, lest the English land agent should raise the rent on him, and so leave him in a worse condition than before.

Though Kerry was not at home, Shilrick found that there were still signs of life within the shanty. An important-looking cock, with a prodigious plume of feathers adorning his head, followed by two or three hens, flew down from the rafters, where they had been quietly roosting. A favourite collie, now too old to follow Kerry for any long distance, lay stretched out in front of the fireplace, and an unusually clean-looking pig was enjoying a sound sleep on a couch of straw in a far corner of the apartment. The place being devoid of all unnecessary or superfluous furniture, Kerry had been obliged to dispose of his limited wardrobe by hanging various articles of clothing upon ropes passed across the ceiling.

To Shilrick, accustomed to barrack-life and discipline, the general untidiness that prevailed was perfectly appalling ; but with this energetic young soldier, to think was to act.

“ Oh, Kerry, Kerry !” he said, smilingly, “ sure ’tis aisy seein’ *you* don’t belong to the army, annyhow. Troth, then, I wondher how he does be findin’ his things when he wants thim, at all, at all ! I wondher if Thalia has iver had a pape

into this illigint apartment ; sure it's her hand is wanted here, enthirely. An' the fire's gone out, too, an' poor ould Rory widout a bit av a flame to kape him warm," he added, as he kindly stroked the head of the collie, the dog having hastily risen on Shilrick's entrance, to give him a hearty welcome.

And, indeed, he was soon surrounded by all the live-stock belonging to Kerry. The cock and the hens were running about his feet, while even the pig, on waking up suddenly and finding who was the disturber of her slumbers, came forward and gave a grunt of satisfaction. All dumb creatures seemed to understand by instinct that, in the little drummer, they had a true friend.

"Sure *I'll* soon have iverythin' nate and illigant 'gainst Kerry comes in," continued the active lad, as he commenced to arrange the heterogeneous collection of articles, the disposal of which was certainly not suggestive of "a place for everything, and everything in its place." When he had reduced the confusion to something like order, he relighted the fire and next decided to have an inspection of the commissariat department, seeing that there were no preparations for supper. "Now, Kerry hasn't had the manners to prepare for his guest, at all, and it's himself knew I was comin'," exclaimed the boy. "But, sure, here's a rabbit, an' here's bread an' chase, an' pratees ; troth, I'll have an illigant entertainment set out by the thime he comes, though 'tis mighty long he's sthaying', an' he knows it isn't ofthen *I've* an avenin' to be wid him, but 'tis little the boy thinks av that, I'll go bail, whin he's got Thalia wid him. Och !" he cried, impatiently, at last, when all his arrangements for the forthcoming entertainment were complete, "what *can* have come to Kerry, that he's not here? Maybes he's all this thime wid Thalia an' her grandmother. It'll not thake long, I'll go there afther him—but maybes the supper will spoil," he continued, thoughtfully, in some fear lest his culinary efforts should be unsuccessful for want of proper superintendence. "I'll put the pot aff av the fire, an' set it on wan side ; it'll not go wrong," he decided. "An' ould Rory will sit an' watch it, and see that craythur, *Molly Bawn*," shaking his head smilingly at the pig, "doesn't be burnin' her nose

agin the pot, thryin' to thaste what's in it. I'll sthart now for Granny Coghlan's, an' see what's kapin' that rogue av the world, Kerry, so I will."

Once more Shilrick set off across the moor, and was not long in reaching the Coghlan's shanty. Outwardly this abode presented much the same appearance of poverty as Kerry's dwelling, but within all was bright and comfortable, for there Thalia's careful, industrious hands had softened and toned down all the defects, while her old grandmother, tidily dressed, and seated in a large wooden chair, amid a pile of gay chintz-covered cushions, presented a perfect picture of ease and comfort, while the expression of calm contentment on her face showed that she was well and lovingly tended. She still retained traces of the beauty that once had been hers, and which had evidently been inherited by her granddaughter Thalia. In truth, Granny Coghlan had been a belle in her day, and had caused many a heart-ache among "the likely boys" in her neighbourhood.

When Shilrick knocked at the door and received no answer, he imagined that Mrs. Coghlan must still be alone, and that, being deaf, she could not hear him ; so lifting the latch he looked in and found, as he had thought, that the only occupant of the room was the old woman, who had evidently been employed in knitting, but now the needles lay idly on her lap, and she seemed wrapped in a deep reverie, gazing at the flickering, ever-changing lights in the peat fire, her thoughts very far away from the present, and from the scene before her.

That the entrance of Shilrick O'Toole was a pleasant interruption could be easily seen by her cheerful smile, and eager look of pleasure when she saw the bright face, and heard the merry voice, of the drummer.

"Save ye kindly, Granny Coghlan !" he cried, "sure it's mesilf said I'd come to see yez soon agin, an here I am, throe to me word."

"An' it's welcome ye are, Shilrick, *ma bouchaleen dhas*," replied Mrs. Coghlan, as she held out her hands to him.

"But, Granny," continued the boy, anxiously, as he placed his arm over the back of her chair, and bent his head close to hers, so that she might be the better able to hear what he

said, "sure I thought to find Kerry an' Thalia here—what's become av thim, at all, at all?" asked Shilrick, anxiously. "Kerry isn't at home, it's from his shanty I've just come."

Granny Coghlan was always particularly "dull o' hearin'" when roused suddenly from sleep, or a deep reverie, in which she frequently indulged in her lonely hours, and, like most deaf people, she always imagined that her companion had said something totally different from the subject under discussion at the time.

"Oh!" she cried in sudden terror, and mistaking what Shilrick had said, "who is it that's been spakin' av lettin' this shanty? Hasn't it been the home av mesilf an' thim belongin' to me, all these years gone? Who's goin' to tarn me out now, I'd be for axin'?"

"No wan that I know av, Granny dear," replied the boy, smiling, "it's all right enthirely; I only said that Kerry wasn't home yet."

"Kerry gone to market!—what market?" she asked, now fairly bewildered. "Sure he hasn't taken Thalia wid him to anny av thim places at this hour o' the night?"

"No, no, Granny, I was saying he wasn't home yet," cried Shilrick, elevating his voice still more.

"Ah!" said the old woman, at last understanding, as she became more accustomed to the tone of his voice, "no, he isn't, nor Thalia nayther, but they ought to be; sure I don't know what she manes by sthayin' out all the dhay, philantherin' about, an' enjoyin' hersilf, whiles I'd be left here all me lone enthirely."

Shilrick, knowing of old that Granny once started on a real or imaginary grievance was no joke, at once tried to soothe her over, an' "put the furrawn on her," at the same time remarking how unjust it was to blame Thalia for leaving her in solitude, seeing that it was on her account the industrious and affectionate girl was working, being employed in one way or another, from early morning until nightfall.

At last having performed this task satisfactorily, he seated himself on the settle opposite Granny Coghlan, and commenced to relate to her some of the latest exploits of his barrack life, and various items of gossip of the neighbourhood

which he had chanced to hear, and which he thought would amuse and interest the old woman.

After a pause in the conversation, during which the boy sat gazing thoughtfully into the fire, building castles in the air, and dreaming of future fame and glory, while old Granny Coghlan watched every passing expression on the bright, hopeful young face, with an earnest, wistful look in her sad eyes.

"Come here beside me, 'Shilrick *alannah* ! " she said, "an' maybes ye'll sing me one av thim purty songs," she added, as he brought a low stool and set it at her feet.

"Troth an' I will, Granny," he replied readily, "if it'll help to cheer yez," and forthwith he sang the following words to the old Irish tune known as "The Basket of Oysters" :—

"Oh! could we do with this world of ours,
As thou do'st with thy garden bow'rs,
Reject the weeds and keep the flow'rs
What a heaven on earth we'd make it ?
So bright a dwelling should be our own,
So warranted free from sigh or frown,
That angels soon would be coming down,
By the week or month to take it.

Like those gay flies that wing through air,
And in themselves a lustre bear,
A stock of light still ready there,
Whenever they wish to use it ;
So, in this world I make for thee,
Our hearts should all like fire-flies be,
And the flash of wit or poesy
Break forth whenever we choose it.

While every joy that glads our sphere
Hath still some shadow hovering near,
In this new world of ours, my dear,
Such shadows will all be omitted.
Unless they're like that graceful one,
Which when thou'rt dancing in the sun,
Still near thee, leaves a charm upon
Each spot where it hath flitted."

"That was well sung, *acuishla machree*," said the old woman, after a few moments' silence, when, on Shilrick looking up at her, thinking that she had fallen asleep, he found

her surreptitiously wiping her eyes with her apron, and trying to hide the fast falling tears.

"Why, Granny ! sure I haven't made ye sad ?" he exclaimed. "It wasn't a sarious song I was singin'."

"No, darlin'," she replied, sadly, "but it's yersilf minded me av wan that used to sing that tune, but not thim words, in the days long passed away."

"Some wan ye cared for, Granny ?" asked the boy, softly.

"Maybe so," she answered, with some reserve in her voice.

"Tell me about it, Granny darlin'," requested Shilrick, with the intense curiosity of youth.

It has been said that Kerry O'Toole, and Shilrick, were both favourites of Mrs. Coghlan, but for the youngest brother she had a peculiar affection. It was whispered that in the days of her youth, she had loved and been beloved most deeply, by the grandfather of the two lads, but that some misunderstanding had parted them, and she, in pique, and to show, as she proudly expressed it, "that she didn't care *a thrawneen* for her lover," foolishly married in haste, only to repent at leisure, and to find, when too late, that her husband, Denis Coghlan, was an idle, worthless vagabond, and worse than all, that it was his treachery which had been the cause of the cruel misunderstanding between herself and her lover. From the time of that discovery, she had never known one day's happiness.

Shilrick was said to be very like his dead grandfather, and he had been named after him, and these were probably the chief reasons for the old woman's wonderful affection for the little drummer.

"Tell me, Granny !" again persisted the boy, inquisitively, and hoping to hear a thrilling romance.

"There then, darlin', sure an' I will, *avick machree*," she said, tenderly, as her fingers strayed caressingly among the powdered locks of fair hair that adorned the head resting so contentedly on her knee.

Thus they sat, Granny Coghlan, still beautiful in her old age, and the handsome boy, with the earnest, thoughtful eyes. The light from the fire now glancing on both faces and resting with a warm, ruddy glow upon Shilrick's red coat and glittering accoutrements, then dying away in a faint,

fitful flame, and leaving them in shadow—a more suitable accompaniment to the sorrowful tale the old woman was relating to the boy. Even now, though long years had passed, and Granny Coghlan had seen two generations grow up around her, yet the pain seemed as keen as ever, while, in memory, she wandered back to the days when she had been called “The Beauty of Wicklow,” and when Shilrick’s grandfather was ever to be found at her side, with heart as staunch and true as his little namesake and descendant, now sitting at her feet.

When Mrs. Coghlan had ended the sad recital of the romance of her youthful days, Shilrick shook his head gravely, and somewhat startled her by the solemn remark :

“Oh Granny dear ! Sure ’tis this world that’s full av sorrow an’ care, enthirely !”

“What’s that ye’re sayin’ ?” she queried, anxiously, and when the boy repeated his words, she tenderly put her arm around his shoulders, and, drawing him nearer to her, peered down into his face. “*Acuishla machree !*” she murmured, softly. “Sure, I don’t like to hear such words as thim from yersilf. Come, Shilrick, *ma bouchaleen dhas*, look up—let me see the smile on yer face agin. That’s right, now !” she added, as he lifted his bright, merry face to hers, “that’s well, *avourneen !*”

Ah, Granny Coghlan ! little did you think when you tried to call forth that smile, that it would be the last seen on the little drummer’s face for many a weary day. Well might you draw the poor, motherless boy closer to you, with tender, caressing touch—well might you breathe that earnest prayer for his future, for the shadow of a terrible trial and grief was hovering over him.

“Maybes I shouldn’t have told yersilf, Shilrick jewel, an’ yet I thought it’s a warnin’ it might be to yez, when the thime comes, an’ ye see a colleen that’s worthy av yer love. Then, darlin’, remember Granny Coghlan’s tale, and niver let jealousy or mistrust find a place in yer heart, thrust thim out as ye would yer bittherest enemy, or they’ll sthale all the sunshine an’ happiness from yer life enthirely.”

“Ah, but, Granny,” said the boy, earnestly. “Sure, *I’ll* niver be in love, at all, at all.”

"Why, honey?" queried Mrs. Coghlan, amused at his decisive tones.

"Bekase," he replied, gravely, shaking his head, "it does be always bringin' a dale av throuble to thim that's in it."

"Ye'll maybes think different some day, darlin," said the old woman, with her sweet, peaceful smile. "But, Shilrick *avick*, what can be the raison that Kerry and Thalia are not home yet? Sure, I niver knew him kape her out late like this bafore," she added, anxiously.

"Ah!" cried Shilrick, quickly rising to his feet, "what's that?"

The noise that had startled him, was that of many voices in excited discussion; several people were evidently approaching the shanty, but before he could reach the door to see who were the intruders, it was burst open, and Sheymus Malloy entered, bearing in his arms the lifeless form of Thalia Coghlan, the water streaming from her clothes and from her long hair, which, having become loosened from its coils fell over his shoulder in rich profusion. Sheymus himself was wet to the skin, and bruised and torn by the rocks in his fruitless attempt to save Kerry, and afterwards in rescuing Thalia. Worn and weary too, with the heavy though precious burden he had borne so far, he was just able to place Thalia carefully and tenderly on the wooden settle, when he fell exhausted into the nearest chair, apparently unable to utter one word of explanation to the horrified occupants of the shanty, who were watching the scene as if spell-bound; while those who had accompanied Sheymus, and who, but a few moments before, had been talking so volubly now seemed under the general spell of silence. One solitary wayfarer had chanced to cross the bridge a moment after Thalia's accident, indeed he had witnessed her fall, from the road, and was in consequence quite a hero, and a most important personage amongst his less fortunate companions, who had joined the mournful procession as it went along, always adding to their numbers, until by the time they reached Mrs. Coghlan's shanty, there were gathered together some two or three dozen men, women and children, a few of whom contrived to crowd in

after Sheymus, the remainder having to be satisfied with a more distant post of observation, outside the open door.

"Kerry! where is Kerry?" cried Shilrick, at last; "can't ye tell me, Sheymus Malloy? Can't anny av ye tell me?" he asked, despairingly, turning to those who had accompanied Sheymus.

"Heaven help ye, Shilrick! Sure, it's drowned yer brother Kerry is," said one of the women, pityingly.

"Drowned!" exclaimed the boy, "where? Oh! tell me more—some wan—tell me—so that I can go to him!"

"'Twas at the ould bridge, where he wint to mate Thalia Coghlan," replied one of the men.

"An' *you* were there wid *her*, it's yersilf that's brought her home," cried Shilrick, fiercely, turning to Sheymus Malloy. "An' oh! sure I know now, as well as if I'd sane it wid me own two eyes. 'Tis yersilf that's done it!"

"*I!*" said Sheymus, slowly, roused for a moment from the apathy that seemed to be stealing over him. "*I* done it? Ah! no, no! 'twas himsilf—he—he jumped over the bridge—he wanted to dhrown himsilf—an'—oh! sure it's bewildered I'm growin! bewildered, enthirely," murmured the young farmer, sadly, as he buried his face in his hands.

"Listen, Sheymus Malloy," said Shilrick, passionately, going up to him, and clasping his shoulder like a vice in his anguish and sorrow. "Listen! I say, whether *he* done it himself or not, 'tis *you* that's been the cause. D'ye hear? I say it's *yersilf*—an' that colleen, yondher. Heaven forgive her for her faithlessness to Kerry! I can't, nor *nivver will*—an' oh! how can I tell that ye didn't quarrel wid him and push him over the rocks? Annyhow, I tell yez 'tis naythur more nor less than murdher ye've committed for 'tis yersilf that made her false to Kerry, an' if he drowned himself, ye've his life, an' his dark crime on yer sowl. Ye may escape justice *here*, but there's another world above, an' ye'll mate it *there*, for as surely as if ye'd sent a bullet through his heart, 'tis yersilf that's Kerry's murdherer this night. Oh, Kerry, Kerry!" cried the boy, with passionate emotion, as he rushed to the door and out of the shanty, "Heaven help me! I've not wan av me own kith an' kin left to me now in all the whole wide world!"

In the confusion on the entrance of Sheymus Malloy, and Shilrick's accusation of him, no one seemed to have noticed Thalia's grandmother ; the poor old woman had risen from her chair, and attempted to hasten to Thalia's side, but she had paused midway, her hand grasping the table, her face pallid and with an unconscious expression upon it, she appeared for some moments as if turned to stone ; at last she gasped out the words, "Thalia ! my little Thalia ! Oh ! my grand-child ! the jewel av my heart ! She was all I had—all—she isn't dead ! Thalia ! Thalia !" she cried, mournfully, holding out her arms towards the prostrate form on the settle ; and in a moment, before anyone had time to go to her assistance, she fell prone upon the floor. Kind hands raised her, and carried her tenderly to her chair, where they laid her once more among the pile of cushions.

She had every care, and loving attention, but ere the dawn of another day, poor old Granny Coghlan's eyes had closed in her last long sleep.

There was a look of ineffable peace and content on the beautiful old face, her spirit had flown to that happier home above, where she would never more know sorrow nor care, where life's dark shadows have no place, where all is joy and rest for—

" The day is aye fair
In the land o' the leal."

CHAPTER XVII.

" 'Twas fate, they'll say, a wayward fate,
Your web of discord wove ;
And while your tyrants joined in hate !
You never joined in love !
But hearts fell off that ought to twine,
And men profaned what God had giv'n
Till some were heard to curse the shrine,
Where others knelt to Heav'n."

MOORE.

Somewhere about the same time when Wolfe Tone left Ireland, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, a nobleman who had formerly served as a major in the army, and who was a brother of the Duke of Leinster, joined the society of the "*United Irishmen*."

Lord Fitzgerald's example was soon followed by Thomas Addis Emmet ; Arthur O'Connor, a nephew of Lord Longueville ; a doctor, belonging to Connaught, called McNevin, who was then practising with considerable success in Dublin ; and other political agitators of the day, all of whom were most important additions to the *Society*, and being men of note they were called upon to act on the "*Executive Directory*." This was during the years 1796 and 1797.

The coercive measures adopted by Parliament, and which were carried through Session after Session, together with the Orange persecutions in many counties, and other real grievances of which both the Irish Protestants and Roman Catholics had good cause to complain, Lord Fitzwilliam's recall, the continued failure, year after year, of Ponsonby's motion for Reform, followed by the secession of the famous

Grattan and his supporters from Parliament, the former being in despair at the non-success of his demands for "Irish Independence," and last, but not least, the total suppression of the public Press, all combined to increase the discontent that was now rife throughout the whole of the country, rousing rebellious feelings, even in hearts that had hitherto been most loyal. Poor, unhappy Ireland, was indeed at that time like a rudderless ship, tossed hither and thither upon the waves of a tempestuous sea of discord, mutual mistrust, and civil warfare.

The suppression of the Press was most disastrous in its consequences, as it must ever be in a country where freedom has been the rule. The public Press is ostensibly the representative of the people, whether they be Tories or Whigs ; it is the voice by which they make known their wishes, their opinions, their complaints, or their praise. Each party ought to read and to carefully study the opinions of the other, for no man can be a just politician who understands only *one* side of a question. It is said that "The voice of the people is the voice of God," but it must at the same time be remembered that the term *People* in this sense includes Tories and Whigs alike, without favour or affection, without distinction of class, politics, or religion.

At the latter end of 1797, Ireland was truly in the state of "a house divided against itself." A storm had been raised which was felt more or less keenly throughout the whole country, and all Irishmen, whether Protestants, or Roman Catholics, were doomed to reap a terrible whirlwind. The Irish people were at this time so maddened and exasperated at the cruelty and the injustice that was so constantly heaped upon them, that they appeared to be blind to the fact that "union is strength," and that while they continued their dissensions amongst themselves, their enemies had the more power to crush them ; many who were only half Irishmen, and who had come over from America on the pretence of helping them, as well as foreigners from other lands, found that their best opportunity of advancing their own interests was in keeping Ireland a disunited country.

In 1798, there were many important risings in different

parts of Ireland ; and at one time the Rebels numbered 500,000 strong, 300,000 of whom were fully armed and well-disciplined. A large proportion of these belonged to Ulster and Leinster, while many were returned for Connaught and Munster.

Of these forces, Lord Edward Fitzgerald was appointed Commander-in-Chief. He was most unfortunate in placing so much reliance upon receiving help from France, which had been repeatedly promised, for these promises were not fulfilled, and a few days previous to the great outbreak in Ireland, Buonaparte sailed, with the flower of his army, for the expedition to Alexandria.

Lord Edward Fitzgerald was destined never to be the leader of the Rebel forces in the great rising, for he was basely betrayed by a man called Higgins, and was arrested in his place of concealment by three English officers.

The insurrection was thus left for a second time without a leader, but the organization had then advanced so far, and the arrangements were so complete, that the intended Rebellion proceeded as before ordered. Many encounters, more or less serious, followed, between the Insurgents and the Military, at Rathfarnham, about three miles from Dublin, where Lord Ely's yeomanry were attacked by 500 of the Rebels, who would probably have been victorious but for the appearance of a large body of Dragoons from the city. At Dunboyne the insurgents attacked an escort of the Royal Scotch Fencibles, but without much loss on the other side, save that the former contrived cleverly to capture the baggage of the soldiers. At Naas a large force attacked the garrison and renewed the attack three times with the greatest gallantry, but were at last repulsed, with considerable loss of life.

At Prosperous, however, the rebels were particularly successful, for there they cut off a whole garrison, composed of a powerful body of Cork Militia.

Next followed the important rising at Wexford. The Insurgents collected in great numbers, and marched to Enniscorthy, which they succeeded in taking. They were then encamped on Vinegar Hill for some time ; but here they were at last surrounded by the soldiers numbering over 20,000, and

were forced to surrender after nearly two hours' hard fighting, when many distinguished themselves by their bravery. Great loss of life was the result of the terrible encounter on Vinegar Hill.

After this, the country was somewhat quieter, but only for a very short period, and there were constant skirmishes between small detachments of the Royal troops and the Rebels, in different Provinces, for the English Government still continued the coercive measures that were so repugnant to the Irish people, and now they had no Grattan in Parliament to plead for Independence.

The daring little band of Rebels under the command of Morven O'Neill, and known as the "Bold Boys of Wicklow," had as yet evaded discovery. O'Neill was an experienced officer, with a thorough knowledge of military organization and tactics, and he was keeping his small force in reserve. He had no desire rashly to risk the lives of his men; he wished to gain time, and to obtain more recruits for his ranks, also to be more fully prepared before instituting a rising in that part of Wicklow. He was ambitious for the honour of his country, and hoped in time to be able to collect a body of men on whom he could depend, powerful enough to withstand the attack of the military stationed in the neighbourhood; otherwise, he felt that he would be injuring rather than benefiting his country if he thoughtlessly sacrificed the lives of her faithful sons, and so lessened the chances of his beloved Erin becoming an Independent Kingdom with a Monarch of her own, and an ideal "Home Rule."

O'Neill combined the zeal and the courage of the true Patriot, together with the caution and forethought of the experienced officer; for, though still very young, he had been in the army himself, and had seen some active service. Undaunted, yet saddened at the news of the failure of the Rebels in other parts of Ireland, he still hoped for better days to come, while such men as Holt and Emmet lived to cheer, and to incite their brave countrymen to Patriotism.

CHAPTER XVIII.

" There were some that wore the green, who did betray the green,
On native land we cannot stand through traitors to the green,
Yet, whatsoe'er our fate may be, tho' oceans roll between,
Her faithful sons will ever sing, ' The wearing of the green.' "

Irish Song.

One afternoon, during the Autumn of the year 1798, in a small room in the "Shamrock," Thaddeus Magin, and his countryman and confederate, Silas Charleston, were seated. They had been conversing together for some time, Magin being desirous of persuading his companion to assist him in one of his very questionable schemes. That he had not succeeded in his purpose was evident from the tone of his voice when he next addressed Charleston, and from the very unpleasant expression of his face. Both men were smoking, and, before each, there stood a large tankard containing some liquor of a potent nature of which the widow Kinahan was careful to keep a large supply, expressly for her American guests ; this lady having a good eye to business, and considering it the best policy, always, so far as it lay in her power, to propitiate the Yankee, Magin, who was known to be anything but a pleasant enemy.

Magin was sitting in his usual elegant position, with his feet upon the table, and, after a few minutes' silence, during which time he had been watching his companion furtively, out of the corners of his evil eyes, and with a sinister expression of countenance, he put to him the following question :

" Then yer 'airn't goin' to undertake this' ere business I hev put in yer way ? "

Silas Charleston slowly withdrew the pipe from his mouth, took a deep draught of the liquor at his side, and looking steadily at Magin, replied laconically, "No."

"Then I cal'cate you air a fool!" was Magin's polite and characteristic rejoinder.

"Not such a big one as *you* air, when you think to persuade *me* to put my head into a hole, unless I knew what was at the other end of it," replied Charleston, as he coolly assumed his former easy attitude, and continued smoking.

"I guess I never knew a more darned ungrateful creatur' than yersilf," said Magin. "Hevn't I just been puttin' a good thing in yer way, when I could hev done all the business myself, and saved the liberal reward I offered yer. I thought yer were allays pretty slick, wantin' to put money in yer pocket, without troublin' how yer did it, or where it came from."

"Wa'al yes!—I reckon that's so," answered the other, quietly. "I airn't proud, or over particular *in a general way*."

"Then, why can't yer consent to do what I want yer now, eh?" asked Magin, impatiently.

"Because, I don't see what use that thar money would be to me, if I had a bullet through my head half-an-hour after I'd got it."

"A bullet through yer head!" exclaimed Magin, scornfully, "I calc'late *that* airn't likely, mister."

"A tarnation deal more likely than that I'd ever get the reward out of *you* when I'd done the deed you want me," was the quiet reply. "Do you think that some of the Boys wouldn't find it out soon enough, and," he added, bending forward over the table, and looking searchingly into Magin's face, "I'm dashed if it airn't at all unlikely that *you* would be the first one to tell them."

For a moment Silas Charleston paused to watch the effect of his words upon Magin, and it was with grim satisfaction that he witnessed the sudden start, and expression of fear on the face of his companion.

"No. no," he continued, "I hev said I airn't proud, nor over partic'lar, but I guess I'll hev nothing to do with the mean, cowardly game *you* want me to play now."

"Silas Charleston setting up for a moral charackter!" cried Magin, with an insolent, jeering laugh. "That *air* a caution!"

"Wa'al! I calc'late I hevn't been too scrupulous," agreed Silas, "but when you come to speak of it, I don't know that ayther of us air much of a credit to the 'Stars and the Stripes,' (though I heard yer tellin' the boys at the last meetin' what a sacrifice America was makin' when *you* were allowed to leave the country and come over to fix Ireland for the Irish) but I never went the length you want me to go now, and if you think the business so tarnation easy, an' plain sailin', why don't you do it *yourself*?" he asked, quietly smiling at Magin over the puffs of smoke from his pipe.

"Because I thought I'd give yer a benefit, to show my friendship," was Magin's reply.

"Thank *you*!" said Charleston, incredulously. "And then I guess you would manage to complete that same act of friendship, by gettin' me sent to a happier world sooner than natur' intended, so that I'd tell no tales?"

For some moments the two men sat silently regarding each other. There was a marked difference in their appearance. Silas Charleston was by no means unattractive-looking, though the usual pleasant expression of his face was sometimes marred by the satirical smile that curled the firm, decisive lips. His dark eyes were shrewd, and full of humour, and an easy, good-natured disposition made him a general favourite. He had more than once done good service in skirmishes between the soldiers and the Rebels, for, being a man of undaunted courage, his tall, lithe, slender figure was always to be seen in the thickest of the fight.

On this occasion, Magin's face presented a strange contrast to that of his companion; it was malevolent in expression and full of fierce and vindictive hatred; while Silas Charleston appeared calm, cool, and perfectly indifferent to the opinion of the other.

"And what hev I asked yer to do now, after all yer darned insinuations?" demanded Magin, fiercely, growing alarmed at the manner in which Silas had listened to his proposition.

The latter withdrew the pipe from his mouth, and laughed contemptuously at the other.

"Oh! don't be skeared," he said, quietly, "*I* airn't goin' to betray yer."

"*I* skeared!" cried Magin, indignantly, rising to his feet. "Did yer think yer could frighten *me*?"

"Wa'al! since yer ask my opinion, why certainly, yer did look uncommon blue an' shaky just now."

"I only asked yer to waylay the gal, Anty Kinahan, and make believe to hev a frolic with her, so as to get the letter she has concealed about her dress," said Magin.

"Frolics with gals is more in *your* way than *mine*. You hev tried that before, and I'd hev thought yer had enough of it last time," replied Charleston, quietly. "And," he continued, "I guess Anty Kinahan isn't just the sort of gal to 'frolic with' nayther, an' there's few will beat her lover, Owen Maguire, when he's roused. Anty has done me no harm that I should try to make the gal break her trust and give me that letter. It might get her into trouble."

"Lord!" exclaimed Magin, sarcastically. "Air yer turnin' preacher now? What is it yer came over from America for, eh? Wasn't it to get all the pickings yer could out of Ireland, and the Irish?"

"That's so," answered the other, "but *honest* pickings, so much for every recruit—so much for every dollar I could gain for '*the cause*'—and hevn't I worked hard for all I've got? Didn't I plead for Ireland as if I'd been born in the land of the harp and the shamrock, and an Irishman from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet? And," he added, with a mischievous smile, "didn't the money come pourin' in?"

"Yes;" replied Magin, "an' I guess that a darned lot of it stuck to yer fingers on the way to '*the cause*.'"

"Why, certainly," said Charleston, coolly. "I calc'late that in the course of circulation the coins air bound to lose weight."

"The money bags wouldn't be none the heavier after passing through *your* hands," remarked Magin, insolently.

"No, I guess not! seein' that what goes through *my* hands has to go through *yours* as well. But now, Magin, yer hevn't told me why yer want to get that thar letter from Anty Kinahan."

"That airn't any business of yours," answered Magin, angrily.

"Shall I tell you?" asked Silas Charleston, as he again leant over the table, and looked steadfastly at Magin. "Shall I tell yer? 'Tis because you want to find out the private affairs of our Captain. *You want to betray O'Neill!* Ay," he continued, as he rose from his seat. and going round to Magin. Laying his hand on the back of his chair, he leant over him: "You air wearin' the green now; you hev taken the oath to stand by '*the cause*,' an' you're takin' payment for your services, yet, at this moment, Thaddeus Magin, I know well you would betray *any* or *all* of 'the Bhoys' into the hands of the English Government for the sake of the reward, if you could only do it with safety to yourself. But, take heed!—take heed! I guess you wouldn't be the first traitor that fell a victim to his own plot. I mayn't be a particularly good man, but I calc'late I'd draw the line at takin' blood-money, an' provin' false to those who trust me. No," he added, as Magin again rose angrily, and made a threatening gesture, "*I shan't betray you. I hev told you before, treachery airn't in my line, but mark what I tell you now, Thaddeus Magin, I'll watch an' give warnin' when I can—those that air innocent of harm to others—and that hev dealt honestly by us, shall never be caught in any of *your* infernal rat-traps, while Silas Charleston lives to warn them of their danger.*"

With these words, the young American turned and left the room, while Magin stood contemplating the door through which he had disappeared, with a look of utter consternation on his evil, cunning face.

"Wa'al!" he muttered at last, "if that airn't an' awkward turn in *my* arrangements. I guess I shan't get any more assistance from Silas Charleston, that's certain; I guess that's real unfortunate. I wonder if I could persuade one of those cut-throat Greeks to do what I want, or if I could poke any life into the lazy Spanish gentlemen. I must be careful though; it airn't safe to trust others. But now, for the present, the first step for *me* is to find out what's in that letter which O'Neill gave to Anastasia Kinahan."

Half-an-hour previous to the conversation between Magin

and Silas Charleston, they had both been standing at the open window of the room, and were unseen witnesses of an interview between Morven O'Neill and Anty Kinahan, when the former gave the girl a letter, and was evidently most particular in his injunctions to her to keep it safely, to let no one see it, and to deliver it herself into the hands of the person for whom it was intended.

This much the two listeners understood from a few words that they chanced to overhear, and they also saw Anty conceal the letter beneath the folds of her neckerchief. Magin's busy brain was always on the alert to find some way of harming, or annoying O'Neill, and being most anxious also to discover anything against him which might make the men under his command mistrust their young Captain, he thought that the letter now entrusted to Anty might possibly contain some information which would assist him in his nefarious designs; but being an arrant coward he was always anxious to leave to others all the danger that might accrue from his plans, and so thought that he would try to persuade Silas Charleston to assist him. In this instance, however, he had mistaken his man. It is true that Silas was daring and fearless, and he was—as he himself had owned—not over scrupulous in the matter of amassing a fortune as speedily as possible, and with the least trouble or exertion on his own part, but the man was not all bad, he was a strange mixture of good and evil, and had many of the fine qualities of his warm-hearted, and kindly-natured countrymen; the cruel envy and vindictiveness that were the leading characteristics of Magin's nature, formed no part of his. Young Charleston, moreover, possessed two items with which the other had never been burdened, namely, a heart and a conscience. He had no dislike to O'Neill; in him he recognized the leal, true Patriot, and he honoured and admired, though he could not emulate, the man who, utterly forgetful of self, was devoted heart and soul to the interests of his country, willing and ready to live or die in her cause. He also respected and liked O'Neill's pretty foreign bride, who had always a few kindly, pleasant words for the very humblest of her husband's followers whenever they crossed her path. There was nothing mean or cowardly in Silas Charleston's

nature, and he was the last man Magin should have selected to play a treacherous part.

After some thought and anxious consideration, Magin at last decided on going in search of Anty Kinahan himself, and trying, if possible, by some means to find out the contents of the letter with which she had been entrusted, but no sooner had he come to this conclusion, than the door opened, and the girl herself appeared. Her cloak was thrown loosely around her, and she was evidently prepared for going out of doors. Magin noticed this, and became the more desperate to get the letter into his hands before she left, if but for a moment, so that he might at all events ascertain to whom O'Neill's letter was addressed.

"Misther Magin," said Anty, looking into the room, "sure I'm goin' a message, an' I'll be out for a shoort thime, an' mother tould me to ax if Misther Charleston or yersilf would be wantin' annythin' moor before I'd be bhack, Oh! Misther Charleston's gone, I see!" she added, looking round the room.

"Yes, my gal, I guess he has," replied Magin, "but come here, I want to hev a few words with yer. What is it ye're afraid of?" he asked, impatiently, as Anty hesitated and still remained standing at the door.

"N-nothing, Misther Magin," she replied.

"Then, why air yer standin' over thar? Come nearer, I've something to say to yer, very partic'lar."

"Say it quick then, Misther Magin, if ye plase, for 'tis in a hurry I am enthirely," answered Anty, as she very slowly and cautiously advanced farther into the room.

"Air yer goin' to meet Owen Maguire?" he asked.

"Sure, an' what concern is that to yersilf, Misther Magin?" she demanded, proudly.

"None that I know of," he replied, carelessly, "only I guess it's a pity to see such a fine slip of a gal lookin' after a boy like him; that's all."

"An' what have ye agin Owen Maguire?" asked Anty, angrily, and in her indignation going closer to Magin.

During this brief conversation the Yankee had been thinking, and turning over in his fertile brain, the means by which he could contrive to see the contents of the letter

which he had seen Anty conceal beneath the folds of her neckerchief. At last he approached nearer to her, and, with a rapid movement, seized hold of the ends of the neckerchief, and gave it a contemptuous pull.

"Is *that* Owen's last gift?" he asked, scornfully. "I guess I don't admire his taste."

"Troth thin, it's no wan that's axin' ye if ye like it or not," said Anty, drawing back proudly, "An' it wasn't Owen gave it to mesilf, nayther," she added, unwilling that her lover's good taste should be questioned.

"Now I calc'late I could give yer something worth receiving for a love token," said Magin, attempting to put his arm round her, and again pulling the ends of the kerchief, "not a piece of trumpery like *that*."

As Anty angrily wrenched it out of Magin's hand, and turned away from him, she did not notice that Morven's letter fell at his feet. His quick eyes, however, soon discovered it, and, going nearer to the girl on pretence of speaking to her again, he placed his hand on her shoulder, and, at the same time, by a sudden, quick movement, put his foot on the letter, and successfully concealed it from Anty, who indignantly pushing him from her, turned, and ran out of the room.

"Fortune favours the brave!" said Magin, triumphantly, to himself, as he stooped to pick up the letter. "Ah!" he exclaimed, "I guess I *hev* found something important this time. Why, here's a letter to the Colonel's daughter, at Glencree Barracks! Wa'al! I calc'late I'll soon know the contents. The letter's sealed—that's tarnation provokin'—it don't matter, though," he added, as, with his bowie knife, he dexterously contrived to open it without breaking the seal, and, after a hasty perusal, he gave vent to a prolonged whistle of surprise. "*So!*—an assignation between our young Captain, and that spry-lookin' daughter of one of our greatest enemies. What's he got to say to *her*, I wonder? His affection seems pretty considerable—his anxiety to meet the gal still more considerable—that's so, an' no mistake. What would the proud young French madam say to it? Ah!" he cried, muttering a furious imprecation, as he paused on hearing the sound of approaching footsteps, "that's the

gal comin' back. Wa'al ! I guess I'll lay this letter on the floor agin, over by the window thar, where Miss Anastasia was standing. I can't close it agin, but she'll think it's got broken in the fall." Magin had only just time to do as he had said when Anty returned hastily, her face full of trouble and anxiety, her eyes eagerly scanning the floor.

"Hev yer lost anything ?" asked the Yankee, innocently.

"Yes," replied Anty, after a moment's hesitation. "That is—sure I mane—it's nothin' at all, at all, only—only a paper."

"Ah ! I guess I hev'n't seen it," said Magin, coolly. "Yer must have dropped it somewhere else, my gal."

"Ah, here it is !" exclaimed Anty, joyfully, as she discovered the letter on the floor, where Magin had placed it. "Here it is ! Sure it's all right. Misther Magin. I've found it."

The Yankee had meanwhile pretended to assist Anty in her search, but of course looking in every direction but the right, as he wished her to be the finder. Anty, with a sigh of relief and satisfaction, once more drew her cloak about her, and was about to leave the room, when she discovered that the letter was open. "Och ! sure how is this now ? It's open the letther is !"

"Ah ! so it is," agreed Magin. "but like enough that's been done with yer carryin' it about and then lettin' it fall. Yer should take more care of yer love letters, my gal," added the man, with a wicked leer. "I guess now, if I had found that thar interestin' document, and had been an unprincipled party, I could hev opened it an' read it. Oh ! yer needn't look so skeared, my dear, yer can safely trust *me*."

For a moment Anty seemed inclined to look suspiciously at Magin, but, on second thoughts, she remembered how short a time she had been out of the room, and also, that when she returned he was not near the spot where she found the letter ; so, without further remark, and not wishing to have more to say than necessary to the wily Yankee, whom she had always disliked and mistrusted, Anty hurriedly left the room, little dreaming how much mischief had been done, and, had she turned and seen the sardonic expression on Magin's face as he looked after her, she would scarcely

have departed on her errand with such an easy mind and a light heart.

"Yes," muttered Magin, with a diabolical laugh, "I guess I am in luck this time. I know now our Captain's plans for to-morrow night. Ah!" he exclaimed, suddenly, "how unfortunate he didn't say *where*, nor the *hour* he was to meet the gal; only, 'You, my dear, faithful Eveleen, will remember the trysting place, and the time I told you in my *last* letter.' Those were the words he used. There must hev been more letters goin'. What a cussed nuisance I didn't know. But it's to-morrow night he's to meet her. I'll hev to watch well; O'Neill will be *alone*. If I can only get warnin' to the military at Glencree Barracks, and to the cavalry detachment at Bray, I guess Captain Morven O'Neill *alias* Michael Cluny, yer won't escape them *this* time. I must keep my own name in the dark, and take some other when I claim the reward, for the money for the apprehension of *O'Neill* is not the only reward *I* mean to get, and if my name were once known, I calc'late the game would be up, as I'd hev to make tracks out of the country pretty soon. Then, I airn't goin to lose the chance of gettin' a few more pickins out of '*the cause*,' an' of bein' Captain of the 'Bold Boys' for a time when O'Neill's out of the way. Wa'al," he added, in a tone of satisfaction, "I guess Fate has acted pretty considerably in my favour, an' that proud young French bride of our gallant Captain will be glad enough to be Mistress Thaddeus Magin yet, when she's left a lone widdy, especially when I let her know that he was taken through goin' to meet that spry gal, the Colonel's daughter."

Fortune was then favouring the evil plots of this man, but Fortune is fickle, and how long she would be constant to Thaddeus Magin is yet to be seen.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Lady, dost thou not fear to stray,
So lone and lovely through this bleak way?
Are Erin's sons so good or so cold,
As not to be tempted by women or gold?"

Sir Knight! I feel not the least alarm,
No son of Erin will offer me harm;
For though they love women and golden store,
Sir Knight! they love honour and virtue more."

MOORE.

Morven O'Neill could scarcely have found a more secluded or picturesque spot, even in beautiful Wicklow, than that which he had chosen for the meeting with his cousin, Eveleen Corrie.

There was but little traffic in that part, days, even weeks, would often pass when no human foot would tread the rough and lonely path. It was narrow, and had somewhat the appearance of a mountain pass. On one side were banks about thirty feet in height, which were thickly wooded from the base to the summit, with trees displaying every variety of Autumn tints in their luxurious foliage. On the other side, the path sloped down to the edge of a small, dark, still-looking lake, on the margin of which rushes, long grass, and bunches of the yellow iris grew in profusion among moss-covered boulders, or rugged pieces of rock. On the opposite side of this lake rose two hills of irregular shape, and considerable height, the brows of which approached closely to each other, so forming a narrow, rocky chasm between them. Behind all and towering far above them were several peaks of high mountains, and down the rugged side

of one of these flowed a mountain stream which, dashing noisily over the rocks on its course, passed through the chasm and fell over into the lake. Over the lowest range of hills there was known to be a near cut to the mountains, and the spot called "The Rebel's Rest," and also a secret underground passage to the large cave in which Morven O'Neill and his followers had found shelter; but so dangerous was the road, and so difficult of access, so well concealed was the entrance, that this stronghold of the Rebels had never yet been discovered by the Royal troops.

Few even of those who knew the spot well would dare venture to reach the mountains by this route. O'Neill, however, had often made use of it, and some of the "Bold Boys" had also found it a sure refuge on more than one occasion when they were evading the pickets of soldiers who were constantly on the alert. Morven O'Neill was ever careless of his personal safety; he thought not of danger, indeed from his earliest boyhood he had been a stranger to fear, and was therefore thoroughly acquainted with the most dangerous passes and turns in the mountains.

If *he* did not think of his own safety, however, Owen Maguire did so for him; he watched his master with never-failing fidelity, and would always follow him, having his horse in constant readiness, so that at any moment O'Neill would have the better chance of escape if attacked and pursued by his enemies. To avoid notice, Owen was attired generally (when not in the Rebel uniform) in the usual livery of a gentleman's servant, therefore his appearance on the well-tended horse attracted no suspicion, and he was thus enabled to be always at hand to assist O'Neill in any emergency.

Very earnest had Owen been in his endeavours to persuade his master not to run the risk of this meeting with Eveleen Corrie, and in such a spot, where, in the event of his being discovered by any of the pickets, there would be but little chance of his escape, the nearest route to the mountains being the dangerous path over the hills before described, but O'Neill could not be induced to give up all idea of the interview with his cousin, so Owen determined, as he said, "to be avin wid his honour, to kape watch, an' to save him in spite av himself."

Still greater would have been the faithful Owen's consternation, had he known that O'Neill actually intended to take Estelle with him on this wild expedition, as he wished to introduce her to Eveleen Corrie, and to acknowledge her as his wife, so that in case of any mischance happening to himself, Estelle would have the protection of his relatives.

One reason for the road which Morven had chosen being so little frequented was, that the peasantry believed it was haunted, and with awe-stricken faces, they would repeat to strangers the thrilling tale of a beautiful girl who had drowned herself in the dark lake because she had been forsaken by her lover, and whose spirit had been seen by many long afterwards, floating through the water, until her false lover, finding out how worthless had been the one for whose sake he had deceived her, was, by the force of memory, and the power of the old love, lured to the spot, when, unable to resist the spell cast over him, he leapt into the lake, the waters of which closed over him, and he was seen no more. This tragedy had occurred many years before the date of our story, but ever since it had been said to be unlucky for anyone to look upon the lake at any time, but especially after nightfall. On young lovers it was certain to bring dire misfortune.

Neither Morven O'Neill nor Eveleen Corrie were at all influenced by the legend, and both were glad that the superstition of the people regarding the spot was likely to be the means of their meeting being undisturbed.

It was a fine night ; from time to time a bright moon shone forth from behind the clouds, while thousands of stars sparkled like jewels in the sky, their light being reflected on the waters of the lake ; but, when Morven O'Neill and Estelle first arrived upon the scene, it was dark and strangely weird and lonely, for a passing cloud had entirely eclipsed the moon.

Morven wore his Rebel uniform, which was concealed beneath a large military cloak, while Estelle, who still maintained her disguise of a French soubrette, had simply added a red cloak to her usual attire, the hood of which was drawn over her head, so that to a casual observer she would appear like an Irish peasant girl, and so escape particular notice.

"This is the place, Estelle," said Morven, laying his hand caressingly on her shoulder. "Now, my brave little wife, I will help you to climb half way up that bank, where you must remain concealed behind the trees, until I call you ; it will not be for long, I hope."

Estelle shuddered when she looked around, and then in sudden terror clung to Morven's arm.

"Ah, Morven ! I do not like dis place, how dark and silent it is," she exclaimed, shivering, "dark and cold ! Why is it dat you did choose such lonely place to meet dis lady, my Morven ?"

"Because it *is* dark, and silent, and lonely, Estelle. There is the less chance of any interruption here. But see ! the moon is appearing from behind yonder clouds, it will be light enough soon, dear one."

"But, Morven, tell to me now—dis lady dat you are to meet—who is she ?" asked Estelle, with considerable anxiety, and a decided tone of jealousy in her voice, which, strive as she would, she could not hide from Morven.

"Can you not trust me, Estelle ?" queried Morven, reproachfully.

"Ah, yes ! only—only"—she commenced, hesitatingly.

"Only you would feel happier if you knew ; is that it ?" asked Morven, coldly. "Well, Estelle, she is my cousin, Eveleen Corrie."

"De same lady dat has often written to you, and de one to whom *you* did write but yesterday ?" persisted Estelle.

"Yes," answered Morven, with some impatience in his tones. "Now are you content ?"

"Ah ! but if she should love you, my Morven ? She does not know dat you are already married," she continued, anxiously, "and how is it dat *any* woman could help loving *you* ? And you might grow to love her in time."

"Are you beginning to doubt me, Estelle ?" he demanded, sternly.

"No, no !" she cried, "but dese secret meetings, Morven *mon ami*, I do not love dem, it is dat dey are so romantic and——"

"Estelle !" interrupted O'Neill, indignantly. "This is an insult to me that no *man* would have dared to offer with

impunity. Our race have ever been true in love, or in war. Eveleen Corrie is my own cousin, we were brought up together, and love each other like brother and sister. Long, long may that affection last !” he added, earnestly, “for, Heaven knows, I have few enough true friends in the world.”

“Oh, Morven !” said Estelle, sorrowfully. “Is it dat I have offended you, *mon mari* ? Ah ! den it is dat I am indeed desolate. I am always some stupid blunder making. How could I doubt you, when I do love you so truly ?”

“Estelle, do you know the heart of the man you have sworn to love and honour, into whose keeping you have given your life’s happiness, so little, as to doubt his truth on the first occasion that he has to speak to another woman ?” asked Morven, gravely.

“It is not dat, Morven ; but I cannot help feeling dat dere could be no sorrow, no misery, so great, as de loss of your love. I could not live widout it now. Ah ! *mon ami, mon mari* !” she cried, tenderly, her hands clasped around Morven’s arm, her eyes overflowing with tears. “For me, I should droop, I should die, like de flowers, for want of de light dat does make de sunshine of my life.”

“Be content, Estelle, dear love,” replied Morven, with emotion. “As long as I live you shall never want that light in vain. And even in death, when the heart that beats so fondly now for you, and you alone, is cold and still for ever in this world ; oh ! my darling, then remember that true love never dies, but only sleeps to awake again in Eternity ; where it will burn for ever with a still purer, holier flame, and where our hearts shall know no more the agony of parting, pain, and sorrow.”

“It is true, my Morven,” said Estelle, mournfully, “but dat does not lessen de anguish of de broken heart, left to mourn alone in dis cold world, when de one dat did beat responsive to its every throb is gone for ever.”

“I have been making you sad, my little Estelle,” said O’Neill, tenderly, “and we can be so seldom together now, that we must not mar the happiness of our meeting. There are tears in your eyes ; come, dear one ! a patriot’s wife must not weep, but be ever brave and hopeful. I have brought you here to-night, dear love, to tell my cousin Eveleen of our

marriage, to introduce you to her, and to secure her friendship, and my uncle's protection for you, should it ever be necessary. It was for this purpose I entreated her to meet me here, and she, dear faithful girl, consented to do so, though there may be both dangers and difficulties in her way."

"Ah, *cher ami*! who could refuse *you*," said Estelle, lovingly. "But see!" she added, suddenly, "dere is someone coming now! Is it your *belle cousine*, Morven?"

"I think it is, Estelle," replied Morven, looking in the direction she had indicated. "I can scarcely tell, however, until she comes nearer; it is some time since I have seen Eveleen. Now come, dear one," he added, "I want you to conceal yourself among those trees, until I have explained all to my cousin. You will be unseen there, too, by anyone who may chance to pass during our interview. I will call you soon."

Having assisted the half-frightened, timid Estelle to climb the bank, and seen that she was well-sheltered, and hidden by the dense foliage of the trees, he turned to meet the figure now approaching, whom he found, as Estelle had thought, to be his cousin, Eveleen Corrie.

Eveleen greatly resembled O'Neill in her character and disposition, as well as in appearance, and, therefore, though there were many difficulties in her way when she was planning how she could contrive to grant Morven's request for this secret meeting, yet she surmounted them all. She was afraid for the safety of her cousin, but it never for a moment entered into her thoughts to feel any fear for herself, though the road was long and lonely, the times troublous, and the neighbourhood surrounded by wild, lawless men.

Slowly and fearlessly she came along, and very beautiful appeared the Colonel's fair daughter beneath the light of the moon, her graceful form shown to advantage in her tight-fitting dress of purple velvet, the only attempt at ornament being a simple neckerchief of white muslin and lace, with folds of the same on the elbow sleeves. Over all she wore a cloak of purple velvet, lined with satin, and confined at the throat with a jewelled buckle.

The night being sultry, she had thrown back the ends of the cloak over her shoulders, from whence it hung in rich, soft folds nearly to her feet. Her pale, calm, noble-looking face was shaded, but not hidden, by a large beaver hat and long drooping ostrich plume. It was with a look of surprise and sincere admiration that O'Neill regarded his cousin, as he hastened forward to meet her with outstretched hands. As he had told Estelle, a long time had elapsed since he had last seen Eveleen, she was then little more than a child, and although pretty and refined-looking, yet she gave no promise of the rare beauty she now possessed, and to which was added a peculiar, subtle charm, and grace of manner, that never failed to fascinate those with whom she came in contact.

"Eveleen ! dear cousin !" said Morven, as he pressed her hands in his, affectionately. "It is indeed kind and generous of you to have yielded to my request. In truth I hardly dared to hope that you would venture to come to meet me here, and alone."

"Oh, Morven ! how could I refuse ?" she asked, tenderly. "You must deem me cold-hearted indeed, if you think that it gives me no pleasure to see you again, who were ever dear to me as a brother. But oh ! my cousin," she continued, sadly, "why have we to meet thus in secret, frightened for every step we may hear, in terror for every sound that disturbs the stillness of the night."

"You are changed, Eveleen !" said Morven, reproachfully. "There was a time when my cousin Eveleen knew not what it was to fear."

"Nor do I now, Morven !" she answered, "it is for *you* I fear, not for myself. Think how near you are to the barracks, there are even now pickets of our men out in all directions."

"They will not come here," said O'Neill, confidently, "they will keep to the main road which runs below."

"I have but a short time to stay with you, Morven," continued Eveleen. "I may be missed at home, any moment ; but I could not help risking all to come to you to-night, in the hope that what I am now going to say, may influence you."

"Stay, Eveleen, !" replied O'Neill, determinedly. "If it is aught concerning the '*great cause*' you would speak, I may tell you at once that it is useless. I have heard every argument that could be used by great and noble men of both sides, for and against the movement; and the more I hear, the more deeply rooted are my convictions that we are in the right."

"Oh, Morven!" said Eveleen, sadly, "have you no thought or memory for the happy past? Have you never any wish to leave the wild life you are now living and to come home to us again? Dear cousin!" she continued, earnestly, laying her hand on his arm, "you have the undaunted courage of the noble race to which you belong, the blood of Ireland's Kings flows in your veins; you have a true and steadfast heart, and above all—nay, I should rather say *worst* of all in *your* case, you have the genuine enthusiasm and the eloquence that together make you a dangerous advocate, for your words sink deeply into the hearts of those whom you wish to influence, Oh, Morven! why will you use all these gifts in a wrong cause?"

"Eveleen," at last answered O'Neill, after a few moments' silence, during which he had been gazing wistfully and dreamily over the distant hills, as if to gain from them the inspiration he wished, to enable him to impress his cousin with the enthusiasm of which she had just spoken, "Eveleen, I used to be ambitious for myself in the old days, but that feeling is merged in one far deeper and nobler now, that of love and ambition for my country. Do *you*, an *Irish girl*, dare to tell me that it is wrong to cherish such a feeling. No, no, Eveleen, you should rather long and hope for the day when Erin will be free, and an Independent Kingdom. And why should it not be so? Why should we not have a King and rulers of our own, who are *real true-born Irishmen*? Why should our beloved Ireland be governed by those of an alien country—a people who openly express their hatred of us, who know not our ways nor our hearts, and who do not seek to know them? Eveleen!" he continued, passionately, "I tell you that England looks upon Ireland, and upon the Irish, only in the light of a country and a people who may in the future be utilized to her

own advantage ; but I say that this *shall* not continue. We *must* accomplish the glorious end we have in view, as long as one Patriot lives to urge and to encourage our countrymen to stand firmly by each other, true to the ties of brotherhood that bind them. Oh, Eveleen !” he added, enthusiastically, “when I think of *this*, how mean, how petty, seem all my *former* thoughts and aspirations, and I feel that glory, or a Patriot’s death awaits me.”

“ Ah, Morven !” replied Eveleen, mournfully, and with a sad, deep sigh, “forget not the other alternatives—*Exile*—or, a *traitor’s doom*.”

“Indeed, it fills my heart with sorrow to hear you speak thus, Eveleen,” said O’Neill. “you, who ought to use every effort to gain more adherents to our noble cause.”

“But, Morven, there are times when I wonder whether there may not be faults and mistakes on both sides,” returned Eveleen, doubtfully. “The struggle will be terrible, and I fear much that it will end in utter failure ; and then the *people* ! how will you ever make up to *them* for the bitter disappointment, after having raised their hopes so high and afterwards brought upon them all the horrors and miseries of a civil war ? and, Morven,” she added, earnestly, “if Ireland *were* an Independent Kingdom, could we hold it for long as such ? Should we be able to support an Army and a Navy powerful enough to protect our shores from foreign enemies ? Dear cousin, believe me, I am no more indifferent to the sorrows and misfortunes of our country than you are, only, it seems to me, that in the warmth of your enthusiasm and patriotism, you may forget, or overlook, many little points that may be remembered by those who in cooler, calmer judgment may consider the case, and yet be as anxious as yourself for the welfare of Ireland.”

“Eveleen, you are thinking now of my uncle and your lover, Armoric Annesley. Well ! I suppose *they* are bound to uphold the present Government, as they hold the King’s commission and are serving with the Royal troops. *You* naturally derive your opinions from those with whom you come most in contact, but ah, cousin mine !” he added, “I fear *your* patriotism is but half-hearted, after all.”

Poor Eveleen ! But a few weeks ago she had been told

that she was "more than half a Rebel"—now her patriotism was doubted, or, at least, undervalued. In truth, her opinion had of late been much tossed upon the waves of controversy; and, besides, woman-like, she was anxious to see with her lover's eyes and to think as he thought on political as well as private matters. More than once lately the practical, common-sense view of the Irish question had been forcibly brought before her; she had been able to see and to acknowledge the force of it, but still the patriotic side, with all its pathos and poetry, was undoubtedly the most attractive to her enthusiastic and romantic nature. At this moment, however, she felt somewhat indignant at O'Neill's expressions with regard to Colonel Corrie and Annesley, and it was therefore with heightened colour, and an additional light in her eyes that she again spoke to her cousin.

"I do not think," she said, coldly, "that either my father or Captain Annesley could ever be charged with indifference to anything concerning Ireland and her interests; but probably *their* way of seeking redress for the wrongs of our country would not be *your* way, Morven, and—"

"We will speak no more of this, Eveleen!" interrupted O'Neill, hastily, "I have much to say to you yet, and we are wasting the precious moments in useless controversy. Tell me of yourself, dear cousin, and of all that has passed at home since I left for France."

Eveleen was about to reply to Morven when she was startled by the sound of a distant clock striking the hour.

"Oh, Morven! what shall I do?" she exclaimed, "I have been absent too long. That is the clock at Glencree Barracks striking nine. I must leave you now."

"One moment, Eveleen!" cried O'Neill, anxiously, "I have something to tell you."

The striking of the clock was followed immediately by the sound of drums and fifes, then Eveleen was indeed in despair for she knew that the evening tattoo had commenced, and never before had the lively tones of the old Irish melody known as "The Dandy O," been heard by her with anything but pleasure.

"Ah! there is the tattoo!" she cried. "I should have been home long before, but I must wait now until that is over,

and all is quiet once more. And now, Morven, what had you to tell me ?”

“Eveleen!” began O'Neill, earnestly, and taking both her hands in his, “there is a favour I would ask of you.”

“What is it, Morven ?”

“When I was in France,” he commenced, but paused suddenly, with a startled glance over Eveleen's shoulder, at the same time laying his hand on his sword, drawing his cloak more closely around him, and pulling his hat lower over his eyes.

A tall figure in the uniform of an officer of the Marines was advancing slowly towards them ; and thus was the important information concerning Estelle, which O'Neill had risked so much to impart, still untold, and so the mystery and secresy remained to cause sorrow, mistrust and misery to at least two of the three now so strangely met together.

CHAPTER XX.

“ On she went, and her maiden smile
In safety lighted her round the green isle ;
And blest for ever is she who relied
Upon Erin’s honour and Erin’s pride.”

MOORE.

It was with great anxiety, and a very troubled mind, that Mrs. Corrie had watched the preparations, and the departure of her daughter for her moonlight interview with O'Neill. They had not dared to take anyone else into their confidence, feeling that if once the secret left their own keeping, they could not tell how it might be betrayed, either unconsciously or intentionally, and O'Neill's safety, and Eveleen's fair name thus endangered. It was almost impossible, at that time, to be certain whom to trust, and to know who really favoured, or who might be against the Rebel cause ; for private feelings and opinions had often to be shrouded in secrecy.

Mrs. Corrie and Eveleen, though both averse to any underhand dealing or deception, had been obliged, after much thought, and many anxious consultations, to decide on keeping the secret from Colonel Corrie, for they knew well the sorrow it would cause him to hear that the nephew, to whom he was so much attached, and in whom he had ever felt such pride, had now joined the Insurgents, and that he ran the danger of being betrayed and captured any day, by some of the parties of the Colonel's own men who patrolled the roads constantly.

Eveleen had still entertained the hope that, if she could only see her cousin, she might be able to persuade him to leave the Rebels, ere it was too late to save himself being

branded with the charge of treason and disloyalty ; and her father, a true and loyal soldier, brought face to face with this notorious Rebel, to find in him his much-loved nephew. Well she knew that the fate which would then await him would be far more terrible than that of any other traitor, for he had been an officer holding the King's commission. It was true that he had many, and good excuses for his disaffection from the army, but these would find no weight with the English Government. All things being carefully considered, there appeared no other course than that Eveleen should go alone to meet her cousin, but she had a stout heart and a fearless spirit, she was well known in the neighbourhood, and much liked and respected by all, she felt certain that there was not one in all Wicklow who would seek to harm her.

In his letter to Eveleen, O'Neill had told her that he had important information to communicate to her, but, that owing to the nature of it, he dare not trust a messenger with a letter on such a subject, for in the event of its being intercepted it would betray at once the fact that the Rebel chief known as "*Michael Cluny*" was Colonel Corrie's nephew.

There was one, however, whom Eveleen found herself compelled, at the last moment, to take into her confidence, and that was Shilrick O'Toole ; but he, even he, had no idea whom she was going to meet, or what her destination might be. In his own mind he fancied it was to enjoy a quiet moonlight walk with her lover, Captain Annesley, and the boy, whose sharp eyes had of late noticed the coldness existing between the two for whom he had so much liking and respect, was delighted to think that probably at the "witching hour," the lover's quarrel would be "made up enthirely," his boyish mind being in no way troubled with thoughts of the impropriety of such an unconventional proceeding as the said moonlight walk, for, in the drummer's estimation, his captain could do no wrong.

To have gone out of barracks alone, and at such an hour, by the main entrance, without attracting the notice of the guard, would have been impossible, and Eveleen would most probably have encountered some of the officers, if not Colonel Corrie himself. There was, however, a small private door not far from the back entrance to the Colonel's quar-

ters, leading out into a lonely road ; it was seldom used, but always kept open during the day, until after the evening tattoo, when it was barred on the inside, for the night, by the Colonel's orderly.

Not knowing how long she might be detained, and considering it necessary that she should prepare for every remote chance that might occur, Eveleen could think of no other way than to take some one into her confidence, who would watch the little door, and unbar it for her, should she not arrive until after the tattoo was over.

To confide in the orderly was out of the question, while Finch, the Colonel's servant, though faithful enough, was decidedly given to gossip ; but Shilrick the Drummer was a highly-privileged character in the barracks, and was also, as Eveleen knew well, to be thoroughly trusted in any emergency.

She had accordingly arranged for the drummer to watch for her return, and if she did not appear before tattoo, he was to allow the orderly to bar the small door as usual, and then, secretly, to open it for her again, Eveleen promising to secure it, and to make all safe directly she returned.

Weeks, months had passed, and no one had gone near that private door after the orderly had barred it for the night. Surely, thought Eveleen and Shilrick, no one would discover that it had been unbolted on *that* particular night. Eveleen had thought seriously of taking her faithful little Nap with her, for company, on the lonely road she had to travel ; but fears for his safety, and the thought that while she was speaking to her cousin, he might wander away and get lost, decided her not to do so, and thus Nap, to his great distress, was left behind, to be the first to give her a loving welcome on her return home ; but he well-nigh betrayed the absence of his mistress, to Colonel Corrie, who understood that Eveleen, not feeling well, had retired early that evening, and, therefore, asked no questions when he did not see her, but he could not account for the behaviour of Nap. The faithful little creature would not move from the window, where, mounted on a chair, he sat watching for Eveleen's return, occasionally indulging in a mournful whine.

Appalled, indeed, would have been the Colonel had he known what had become of his daughter, and that she was, even then, standing in a lonely spot, far from home, with the notorious young Rebel Chief, "*Michael Cluny*," for her companion ; for, true to her promise to O'Neill, Eveleen had set out on her moonlight expedition, remembering the advice in the old Scottish proverb to "*Put a stoot hairt till a stey brae*," and, as we have seen, had safely reached the trysting place. Mrs. Corrie's anxiety seemed to grow more intense with each passing hour, she could neither settle to her tapestry frame, nor could she read. Twenty times had she taken up her book, and tried to fix her attention upon it, but the effort was useless ; at length her nervous forebodings and fears became so great that she could do nothing but stare out of the window in company with Nap, or pace up and down the room, to the utter astonishment of the Colonel, who had never before seen his stately wife in such excitement.

He was about to inquire the cause of her distress, when he heard a knock at the outer door, followed by the entrance of Finch, who handed him a very ragged, dirty scrap of paper.

Colonel Corrie had some difficulty in deciphering the words, which were written thereon in a very illegible hand ; but, at last, he found it contained the information that "*Michael Cluny*" would be found at a certain spot at that very time, and also that he would be alone. The informer—the paper stated—would claim the reward when the Rebel Chief was either killed, or in the hands of the military, but for the present desired to keep in the background.

The Colonel threw down the paper indignantly, when he had read it. "Miserable wretch !" he exclaimed, "to betray one man thus when he is alone, and defenceless. I wish I had the mean villain here," he continued. "I was anxious to secure the Rebel Chief, for I believe until he is captured, the Rebellion in this part of Wicklow will continue; he has unbounded influence with the people, and his men are well armed and drilled ;—but—oh ! would that this letter had never been sent to *me* ! It is horrible to think of a brave man being thus trapped and surrounded when he is unpre-

pared for danger, it is not fair warfare, it is taking a mean, cowardly advantage of a foe. But enough of this!" he added, impatiently. "Am I also catching the infection of the treason and disloyalty that seem to be in the very air we breathe. Here, Finch!" he called, "take this scoundrel's letter to the adjutant, say that I will be with him immediately, and that he must give orders for the sounding of the assembly."

"Very good, sir!" replied the servant, as he hastily departed on his errand, intent on a voyage of discovery, and with a determination to "institoot inquiries" about the matter on his own account. In the course of his careful investigations, he found that a ragged boy had handed the paper to the Sergeant of the Guard, and then vanished out of sight so quickly that, as the sentry informed Finch, he seemed to disappear into the earth.

For a few moments after Finch had left the room, Mrs. Corrie stood gazing at her husband, with an expression of horror on her face.

"What—what did you say that letter was about, Clinton?" she gasped.

"The letter!" cried the Colonel, angrily. "Oh, don't ask *me* about it! If I only had the villain—the mean informer—here this minute, who has given us this cowardly duty to perform, I—why, sure, I believe I should strangle him! Poor *Michael Cluny*!" he added, sorrowfully, "to be taken prisoner in such a manner, after his brave career."

"*Michael Cluny*!—*Michael Cluny*!" repeated Mrs. Corrie, faintly. "Oh, Clinton, stop the men—countermand your order for the sounding of the assembly. Oh, you know not what you are doing!"

"Impossible!" replied the Colonel, "my duty compels me to attend to this confounded letter. Oh, the scoundrel!" he cried, passionately clenching his hand as he left the room, "if I only had him up before me now!"

"Oh, Morven, Morven!" cried Mrs. Corrie, despairingly, "poor misguided boy! The trouble has indeed fallen upon us at last. Ere a few short hours have passed the secret that we have guarded so faithfully will be known to your uncle, to every officer and man in your old corps, by

whom you were once so beloved and respected. And Eveleen," she continued, anxiously, "ah! what of *her*. Oh, my child! my child! what will they say of *you*? Oh! why did I let you go to-night?" she sobbed, as, with her face buried in her hands, she wept bitter, sorrowful tears.

Poor little Nap tried hard to express his sympathy, but, finding all his efforts were in vain, he returned sadly to his post at the window where he again "mounted guard" to wait for Eveleen's appearance.

Finch had returned to the quarters well satisfied with what he had heard, and was graciously imparting the information to a delighted audience in the kitchen; but neither he, nor the Sergeant of the Guard knew that the ragged urchin who had brought the letter, and then disappeared so suddenly, had been waylaid, and seized by the collar, when a short distance from the barracks, and silently dragged by a strong, masterful hand to a dark, secluded spot, when a low voice, with a decided Yankee tone, demanded:

"What darned mischief he'd been up to with the red-coats?"

CHAPTER XXI.

“ I am bound by the old promise ;
What can break that golden chain ?
Not even the words that you have spoken,
Nor the sharpness of my pain.

Do you think because you fail me,
And draw back your hand to-day,
That from out the heart I gave you,
My strong love can fade away ? ”

ADELAIDE PROCTER.

We must now return to the scene of the interview between Eveleen Corrie and O'Neill, which was so inopportunately interrupted by the unexpected appearance of the young officer then approaching them.

Captain Annesley—for he was the intruder—had left barracks some time before the anonymous letter, concerning *Michael Cluny*, had reached Colonel Corrie, and so he was unaware of the occurrence there, and the sudden order for the party of Marines to proceed to the spot where the Rebel Chief was supposed to be found. Much disturbed in his own mind, and sad at heart with regard to Eveleen, he determined on taking a long and solitary ramble, so that he might think over matters, and decide whether he, or Eveleen, was most to blame for the existing coldness between them.

He began, after careful consideration, to think that possibly he might have judged her hastily, and suspected her wrongfully. At last he even came to the magnanimous conclusion that the misunderstanding which had arisen had been caused by faults on both sides, and that it must come

to an end as speedily as possible, or that the happiness of their future lives would inevitably be wrecked ; but as each possessed more than an ordinary share of pride, the question was—which must give way ?

Annesley decided that whatever was done, whatever steps might be taken towards reconciliation, must be strictly consistent with the maintaining of his own pride and dignity. Being thus intent on his very serious meditations he came upon Eveleen and O'Neill suddenly, and was quite as much startled on seeing them as they were at his appearance on the scene.

Annesley, thinking at first that they were only a pair of harmless lovers enjoying their evening tryst, was, after a passing glance, about to pass on, when the sudden start, and quick movement of O'Neill, together with the fancy that the figure of his companion was somewhat familiar to him, caused him to pause on his way, and to regard the couple more attentively.

The moon was at this moment hidden behind a dark cloud, but, even in that dim, uncertain light, Morven O'Neill had at once seen and recognised his former friend and comrade Armoric Annesley ; and in an instant it flashed through his mind the disastrous consequences that would inevitably follow Annesley's recognition of himself and his cousin, and the indignation of the young officer at finding his betrothed alone with him, and so far from home at such an hour.

"Eveleen !" whispered O'Neill, "see ! we are no longer alone."

"Ah !" she exclaimed, despairingly, "we are lost ! It—it is Armoric !—Captain Annesley !"

"For your sake, dear cousin," said O'Neill, in a low voice, "I *must* tell him who I am, it will be best."

"No, no," cried Eveleen, hurriedly and in the same low tones. "Anything rather than *that*, Morven. My father would hear then—and—"

Eveleen was here interrupted by Annesley, who now approached nearer to them and started when he recognized her, but Morven being in the shadow, and his face well concealed beneath his hat, Annesley failed to identify him ; he had no idea either, that his old comrade was in, or near,

Wicklow, he thought of him as far away in France; the daring young Captain of the "Bold Boys" being known to the military by the name of "*Michael Cluny*." As Annesley came slowly forward to Eveleen and O'Neill, he bowed haughtily to the former, but merely gave a glance of utter contempt at the latter.

"Eveleen! Miss Corrie!!" he commenced, sarcastically, "pray pardon me, for thus interrupting such a *very* interesting interview. This is a curious time and place to see *you*, and with a stranger for your companion."

"I am no stranger, sir!" interrupted O'Neill, proudly, "and Miss Corrie is under *my* protection at present."

"Indeed!" replied Annesley, smiling contemptuously at the other. "Who is this man, I wonder?" he muttered to himself. "His voice seems strangely familiar to me."

Then turning once more to Eveleen, he said, coldly.

"I should have imagined that the most fitting place for Miss Corrie to meet *her friends* was in her own father's quarters."

"Sir! by what right do *you* dare to interfere with this lady?" asked O'Neill, angrily.

"By a right which I do not choose to explain to you, but which I shall certainly now resign for ever," replied Annesley, sternly.

"Armoric! Oh, Armoric!" pleaded Eveleen, earnestly, turning to him, with outstretched hands, her soft hazel eyes raised to his entreatingly, "you will trust me, dear?"

"For your sake, Eveleen, I must tell this officer who I am," said O'Neill.

"No, no," pleaded Eveleen, anxiously.

"Nay, Eveleen! I *must* speak," he replied, determinedly; then turning to Annesley, he commenced his explanation.

"My real name, sir, is—"

"Ah no! you shall not speak," cried Eveleen, despairingly; then drawing O'Neill aside for a moment, she spoke in a low voice, rapidly and entreatingly, to him, "Morven, Captain Annesley will tell my father, and *he* will then know that you have joined the Rebels. Oh! spare him this sorrow, I pray you."

"You need not tell me, sir," said Annesley, coldly, to

O'Neill. "I saw just now, beneath your cloak, the white silk scarf, and the rebel uniform, and from your manner and general appearance I know that you are none other than the Rebel Chief, the Captain of the 'Bold Boys,' known by the name of '*Michael Cluny*,' the man for whom we have been searching so long."

During this interview no one has noticed poor Estelle, she now bends forward, from behind the trees, that she may the better hear the conversation ; her face pale as death, her hands clasped in horror at the revelation she has just heard, for Estelle had, until now, been unaware that the *Michael Cluny*, for the apprehension of whom such a high reward had been offered, was no less a person than her own husband.

She now stood on the bank listening to, and watching, the group beneath her, her eyes dilated with terror.

Eveleen Corrie's anxiety and fear may be better imagined than described, on hearing Annesley's words, and knowing that at least *he* knew her cousin was the notorious Rebel Chief, though he was unaware as yet of the identity of *Michael Cluny* with Morven O'Neill. Once more in her despair she turned to Annesley.

"You will not—oh, promise me that you will not betray him?" she pleaded, her hands clasped around his arm, and an expression upon her lovely face that in any other circumstances Annesley would have found it hard to resist.

"Armoric! you will be merciful—you will not betray him?" she pleaded once more.

For a moment Annesley made no reply, but stood gazing wonderingly at O'Neill.

"I am sure that I have met this man before," he murmured, thoughtfully, to himself. "If he would but raise his hat for an instant that I might see his face." Then aloud, and turning to Eveleen, he said, haughtily :

"So—Miss Eveleen Corrie! your *protector* is but little better than a Captain of Banditti."

"Sir, you shall answer for this!" cried O'Neill, indignantly, at the same time unsheathing his sword.

"You may sheath your sword again, young gentleman," said Annesley, haughtily, "I do not fight duels with those of whom I know nothing."

"Oh! if that is all, I can soon satisfy you on that point," replied O'Neill, proudly. "I am of as noble a family as yourself, perhaps more so. See—here is my proof," he added, going forward to show his ring to Annesley. "*You* know this well!"

Eveleen, however, was too quick for him, and standing in front of her cousin, gently pushed his hand aside, before Annesley could see the ring of the O'Neills.

"No, no—I beg of you to keep your name secret," she entreated, earnestly.

"As you will then, Eveleen," replied O'Neill, "only remember, that whatever trouble and sorrow may come to you, in the future, through this secrecy, I would have saved you at any cost." Then turning to Annesley, he continued, courteously, "I know, sir, that I cannot attribute your hesitation to cowardice, for such an epithet cannot be coupled with the name of one of the bravest officers in His Majesty's service. Are you ready, sir? he asked, approaching Annesley, with drawn sword.

"Oh, stop! I implore you both!" cried Eveleen, standing between them.

"Stand aside, Eveleen!" commanded O'Neill, determinedly, and leading her away to some distance. "We must settle this little difference ere we part."

"The fellow is strangely familiar," thought Annesley. "How *dares* he to speak thus to *her*? Who *can* he be?"

"Now, sir, will you apologise for what you have just said?" asked O'Neill, haughtily.

"Certainly not!" replied Annesley, his dark eyes ablaze with anger, "I *never* apologise. I rather *repeat* that your adherents are but little better than banditti; the most of them are men who will not work, and have joined the '*great cause*,' as you call it, as an excuse for the idleness by day, and the plunder by night."

"Do you *dare* to say this of my brave Boys?" demanded O'Neill, as he grasped his sword, passionately. "I insist, sir, that you unsay those false words, or that we settle the question as gentlemen should, unless, indeed, you *fear* me, though *that* I am very unwilling to believe."

"*I fear you, or any mortal man ?*" gasped Annesley, in his fierce passion, which was now fairly roused. "Enough ! enough ! Let it be as you please !"

Annesley and O'Neill crossed swords, and the fight commenced in good earnest.

Eveleen sprang forward, but before she could reach them, Estelle, who from her place of concealment, had been a witness of the whole scene, ran forward, and, with a cry of terror, threw herself before O'Neill. "*Oh, mon ami ! mon ami !*" she cried, frantically.

In the confusion that followed, she was unfortunately wounded by Annesley, and fell at O'Neill's feet. He hastily threw aside his sword, and knelt down beside her, his face pale and stern with grief and anxiety.

"Oh ! what *have* I done ?" cried Annesley, in the greatest distress, at the same time stooping over the prostrate form of the fair French girl, and gently taking her hand in his. "Poor girl ! is she much hurt ?" he asked anxiously of O'Neill, who was supporting Estelle in his arms.

"Stand back, sir !" commanded O'Neill, indignantly, putting Annesley aside. "It is *you* who have done this. Oh my love, my darling ! speak to me, Estelle ! Ah, dearest ! why did you thus imperil your life for one so worthless as I am ?" he cried, mournfully, as he buried his face in his hands. "What will all the troubles and disappointments of my life have been to me compared with this great sorrow, if I lose you, my faithful love ?"

After the first surprise at the sudden appearance of Estelle, both Eveleen and Annesley stood regarding her with silent wonderment.

"Who can she be ?" thought Annesley, then looking across at Eveleen, he murmured half-contemptuously to himself, "So Miss Corrie has a rival she little expected. Some French girl her gay Rebel Chief has met with during his wanderings, no doubt."

Eveleen's mind was as busy as Annesley's, wondering who Estelle was, and where she had come from. In the sudden rush forward, Estelle's cloak had fallen off, and her long fair hair fell around her like a veil. Eveleen was fairly puzzled ; she saw at a glance that the wounded girl wore

the smart dress of a French *soubrette*, though she had, wrapped about her form, the red cloak usually worn by the Irish peasantry.

"Can nothing be done?" she asked at last, as she knelt beside Estelle, and with gentle hands put aside the hair from her forehead.

"Poor girl! how beautiful she is. She looks like a lady—yet she wears the dress of a peasant. Who *can* she be? What is her connection with my cousin Morven?" were the thoughts that passed rapidly through Eveleen's mind.

"Ah!" cried O'Neill, joyfully, after he had forced a few drops of some spirit he had with him in a small flask, between the pale lips of Estelle. "See! she is living—she breathes—oh, my darling! Thank Heaven for this!"

"Oh, Armoric!" asked Eveleen, looking up at Annesley, who was standing beside her, "what can we do for her?"

"I will go for assistance," he replied, kindly, "or, stay! There is a shanty not very far off, we could take her there. It would scarcely be prudent," he added, sarcastically, and glancing over at O'Neill, "for *this gentleman, your friend*, to run the risk of being seen, and probably recognised."

"I thank you, Captain Annesley," said O'Neill, coldly, "but your plan cannot be carried out. I see that this lady has only fainted, and that the wound is but a slight one on the arm."

"Then I regret that I cannot offer any further suggestions," answered Annesley. "The fellow evidently knows me," he said, to himself, "and I remember his voice so well; *who can he be?*"

"She must come home with me!" said Eveleen, decidedly.

"Impossible!" exclaimed Annesley, indignantly. "What do *you* know of her, Miss Corrie?"

"Miss Corrie need not be afraid of having so generously offered shelter to one who has more right than any other, after herself, to claim the protection of Colonel Corrie," was O'Neill's proud answer.

"Let me hold her a moment," said Eveleen, as, gently taking the young French girl from O'Neill's arms, she commenced to bind her handkerchief around Estelle's arm.

"Indeed?" replied Annesley, to O'Neill's last words. "I

think you will find that Colonel Corrie is not the man to shelter or protect *Rebels*, or any one connected with them."

"Rebels!" exclaimed O'Neill, angrily, rising to his feet. "Is *that* a name for the brave Boys and true, who would sacrifice all that men hold most dear in life, for the sake of their beloved country? This is the second insult you have offered to me, sir, and in addition, I have now another debt to pay," he continued, pointing to Estelle. "I demand satisfaction, sir! And I do not leave this spot until I receive it at your hands."

"As you will, then," replied Annesley, haughtily.

Once more the two antagonists, who had once been dear friends and comrades, crossed swords, and the interrupted duel was re-commenced with more fierce determination on both sides than before, for the hot Irish blood of Annesley and the proud O'Neill was now fairly roused.

Eveleen, gently laying Estelle on the ground, rose hastily, and rushing in between the combatants, suddenly seized Annesley's sword and hurled it away to some distance; then, as if struck with sudden remorse for the hasty act she had committed, in the impulse of the moment, she stood pale and silent before them.

"Ah! *now* Miss Corrie, I know the terms on which we stand," said Annesley, and there was both hauteur and indignation in his tones. "Now, were there no *other* tie between us, even friendship and respect would die out of my heart, for the girl who would actually disarm one of her father's brother officers, and leave him at the mercy of a Rebel—"

"Not so, sir," replied O'Neill, courteously, at the same time sheathing his sword. "If Miss Corrie has *literally* disarmed you, she has *virtually* disarmed *me*. I am a soldier and a gentleman—not an assassin."

With these words, O'Neill returned to Estelle, and, again kneeling beside her, was about to raise her in his arms, when he and his companions were startled by the sudden appearance of Owen Maguire, who came running towards them at full speed, his face clouded with fear and anxiety on O'Neill's account, and in such a state of breathless agitation that for some seconds he could not utter a word.

"What is it, Owen?" asked O'Neill, as he hurriedly rose to his feet and grasped his sword.

"Owen Maguire!" said Annesley, to himself, wonderingly, as he noticed the livery worn by Owen. "How comes *he* here. In whose service can he be now?"

"Oh, yer honour!" cried Owen to his master—"the souldiers!—the souldiers! 'Tis a large party av thim will be comin' this way in a shoort thime; they're not far off now, an' yer honour can't get back that way, at all, at all," he continued, indicating the road by which he had just come. "Sure 'tis the big guards they've sthationed in different places along the road. Oh! sure what *can* I do to save ye now, masther darlin'?" cried the faithful man, despairingly.

At first Owen was so anxious about the safety of O'Neill, and so intent on the thought of how he could best rescue him from the impending peril, that he did not notice the prostrate form of Estelle, nor Annesley, who was standing near him, a silent watcher of the scene. He chanced at last to turn his head in that direction, and started back in great consternation. "Ochone!" he exclaimed, in a low tone to O'Neill, "what's happened, yer honour?—an' this gintleman,—" he added, glancing apprehensively at Annesley. "Sure he's an officer in the Marines. Oh! *wirra, wirra*! 'Tis lost enthirely ye'll be, masther darlin', for the souldiers from his barracks will be here this minute."

CHAPTER XXII.

“ How oft has the Banshee cried ;
How oft has death untied
Bright links that glory wove,
Sweet bonds entwined by love !
Peace to each manly soul that sleepeth ;
Rest to each faithful eye that weepeth ;
Long may the fair and brave
Sigh o'er the hero's grave.”

MOORE.

“ There is some treachery here, Owen !” said O'Neill, grasping his sword, as he stood in readiness for the approach of the soldiers.

“ That's throe for ye, sir, an' niver a lie in it,” answered Owen, glancing suspiciously at Annesley. “ But, sure, yer honour, there's not a moment to lose.”

Owen, who, in case of accidents, had taken upon himself to be in waiting in a sheltered hollow with his master's horse, a short distance from the spot where O'Neill was to meet Eveleen, having heard, while in his place of concealment, the conversation of some soldiers who had arrived there, and were to be placed on guard along the road, had thereby gathered that O'Neill had been betrayed, and that in a short time he would be so surrounded as to render escape impossible. In a moment he had mounted the horse ; the trees and brambles successfully hiding him from view, and the soft turf on the roadside preventing the noise of the horse's hoofs from being heard. He soon reached the spot where he knew that he would find O'Neill, and once more concealing the horse, near hand, he hastened with all speed to warn his master of his danger.

"It is this way we must go, Owen," said O'Neill, pointing to the road on his right hand.

"No, no!" exclaimed Owen, "it's the big guard they'll have there, an', sure, ye'll have to pass the barracks. *Och, wirra, wirra!* sure, it's lost enthirely yer honour'll be!"

"Not yet, Owen!" answered O'Neill, quietly, "I need not go by that road. If you have my horse awaiting me anywhere near hand, as usual, I can take the mountain passes."

"Sure, I have yer hoorse, masther darlin', but ye can't go that way; ye couldn't crass the stape mountains, there's sorra hoorse in all the counthry could do it," he added, despairingly.

"Mine will do it, Owen!" returned O'Neill, fearlessly, "I have often crossed those very mountains for practice, my horse and I are well accustomed to it; many times lately, when hotly pursued, we have found that same mountain a good friend."

"Och, begorrah!" cried Owen, suddenly remembering the presence of Annesley, "sure, I'd forgot the milithairey gintleman enthirely, woorse luck to me," he added, in a low tone, "for tellin' iverythin' before him."

"You need not fear *me*, Owen Maguire," said Annesley, who had overheard his last words, "I shall not betray your master."

"Why!" cried Owen, in surprise, on hearing Annesley's voice, and, for the first time, recognising him, "troth, it's his honour, Captain Annesley!"

"Right, Owen!" was the reply, "but I am truly grieved to find that *you* are connected with the Rebels."

"Sure, haven't I an' mine been faithful followers av—" commenced Owen, glibly, but was interrupted by O'Neill, who laid his hand warningly on his arm, to which Owen replied by a very significant nod, as he continued, "Sure, I mane av this gintleman's family; yes, sir, an' it isn't mesilf that would be afther desartin' his honour in the thime av throuble; though," he added, with a sidelong glance at Annesley, "I belave that's what they'd do in the counthry where yer honour has just come from."

Eveleen now came forward to Annesley; laying her hand

upon his arm, she raised her eyes pleadingly to his, and asked earnestly for his help. "You will protect him, Armoric? Oh, say that you will protect him!"

"*I—I* protect him?" exclaimed Annesley, coldly, and in tones of astonishment.

"For *my* sake, Armoric!" she pleaded, eagerly.

"For *your* sake, Eveleen?" he returned, bitterly, as he thrust aside her hand with an impatient movement. "How can *you* dare to ask any favour of *me*, after all that has passed this night, and before my very eyes? No," he continued sternly, as he turned away from her, "I shall do nothing more for your sake; and I will *protect* no Rebel—I could not so far forget my duty as an officer, holding the King's commission. I would not harm, or betray him, for he is alone, I will neither assist at his capture, nor will I be the means of his death. But *I will not* connive at the escape of a notorious Rebel."

With these words Annesley walked away from Eveleen, and picked up his sword, glancing at her, and then at the weapon in his hand, as he once more replaced it in its scabbard, with an expression of strange significance on his countenance.

"Oh, Armoric!" she cried, sorrowfully, "the day may come when I can explain *all* to you,—until then, trust me. Oh! trust me!" she continued, earnestly, laying her hands on his once more, "*believe me*, when I tell you, that if this gentleman is taken prisoner, it will bring untold misery to those you have once called your dearest friends."

"Doubtless it will bring misery to *you*, at any rate," he muttered, resentfully then with a sudden change in his manner, and a voice softened by emotion, he turned to Morven, saying to him, with gentle courtesy, "Go, sir! Escape while there is yet time. My Colonel has done much for me—his daughter now pleads for you. Go! We shall meet again like gentlemen and men of honour—for your conduct has certainly entitled you to that epithet, whoever you may be—and we will then settle our little difference, untrammelled by a woman's tears and petitions."

O'Neill went up to Annesley and offered his hand, which the latter pressed warmly in his.

"Whenever and wherever you please to appoint, Captain

Annesley," he said ; " give your message to Owen Maguire, he will deliver it me. He is always to be found through Anty Kinahan, at the ' Shamrock,' " added O'Neill, smilingly.

" Ah ! this must not be," cried Eveleen, determinedly. " You shall neither of you leave this spot until I have your promise that you will not meet in this way."

" It is useless, Miss Corrie. Your interference is utterly useless," replied Annesley. " We will give no such promise."

" Oh ! " murmured Eveleen to herself, as sadly she turned from Annesley, hurt at the coldness in his voice, when addressing her ; " have I lost for ever the love of the one who was dearest to me in all the world ? "

Had Annesley seen the tears that fell on the girl's clasped hands, and which she had been unable longer to repress, he might have been softened, but her face was turned proudly away from him, and the light was fitful, while she stood in the shadow. It is also possible, however that had he seen her emotion he might have imagined it was on O'Neill's account, rather than on his, and the misunderstanding would thus have been rendered all the greater.

" One word to *you*, sir," said Annesley to O'Neill. " Miss Corrie seems to be *most deeply interested* in you. Let me give you a word of warning. As Owen Maguire has told you that the roads are all guarded, you will have literally to cut your way through each party of men. Should you escape to-night, let me pray you to leave the country as quickly as you can, or you will inevitably be taken ; our soldiers are sent in pickets to scour the mountains, and they *must*, sooner or later, come upon your place of concealment. Oh ! " he added, sorrowfully, glancing at Eveleen, " I entreat you spare for yourself a traitor's doom for *her* sake."

" I do not fear," replied O'Neill, defiantly ; " let them search for me if they will—and find me if they can. But as the French have it, in an old proverb—'*Il passera bien de l'eau sous les ponts d'ici à ce temps-la.*' "

" Ay ! " answered Annesley, gravely, and there is another which possibly you may have forgotten—'*Les plus huppés sont pris.*' "

"The souldiers ! Sure they come !" cried Owen, suddenly, looking round a corner of the rocky bank. "Now masther darlin', it's quick that's the word ; whichever road ye go, ye'll have to fight yer way through thim. I have yer hoorse here, all ready. Look ! look !" he shouted, excitedly. "'Tis roundin' yondher point they are now—they'll be here this minute, woorse luck to thim !"

"Oh ! go quickly ! lose not a moment !" implored Eveleen, in great agitation.

Morven went quickly towards Estelle, who began to revive, and to move slightly.

"Och ! lave the misthress, yer honour," said Owen, anxiously, "she'll be safe enough wid mesilf ; oh ! yes, sir," he continued in, despair, as he saw O'Neill lift Estelle tenderly in his arms, "sure it's mesilf that'll attind to her ladyship. See, it's gettin' bettther she is."

"Leave her to me !" said Eveleen. "She will be well cared for—whoever she may be. Ah, see ! she has fainted again."

"*Och faraoir ! faraoir !* he'll niver manage to escape, burdened wid her weight," sighed Owen, hopelessly.

"I cannot leave her," replied O'Neill, "when she recovered her senses it would break her heart to find that I had deserted her."

"Ah !" cried Eveleen, with a look of horror, as the first of a party of soldiers appeared in the very path by which O'Neill saw the only means of escape. "Too late ! too late !" she sobbed.

"Och, begorrah !" exclaimed Owen, in despair, "I niver thought av thim comin' this way. Ah ! then 'tis the masther that's lost enthirely !" he added, as Sergeant Smith appeared at the head of a party of the Marines with fixed bayonets.

Annesley, by a quick movement, placed himself in front of Eveleen, to conceal her from the view of the soldiers, lest any of them should chance to recognise her ; they were both standing in the shadow of the trees and were not seen at first.

For a few moments O'Neill stood looking defiantly at the soldiers, with Estelle still clasped in his arms. His cloak having blown aside, he was recognised in an instant by the sergeant, who knew the Rebel uniform, and the white scarf worn by the leaders.

"Ah, my lads!" he called to the soldiers, "here is our man at last! Surround him!"

Several of the Marines advanced towards O'Neill, with the intention of surrounding him.

"Don't be too sure, sergeant! You have not yet caught *Michael Cluny*, the Captain of the 'Bold Boys,'" cried O'Neill, as he drew his sword, and with the still unconscious Estelle on his left arm, fought his way bravely through the group of soldiers.

At this critical moment, an unexpected ally appeared in the person of the young American, Silas Charleston, who, with the quiet remark:

"Wa'al! I guess there's pretty considerable unfairity in *this* arrangement, Boys—the numbers airn't equal"—dashed into the midst of the soldiers, and cutting right and left with a small sword which he carried, successfully contrived to cover the retreat of O'Neill, who, taking advantage of the momentary surprise of the soldiers at the sudden appearance of Silas Charleston, together with his own intrepidity and daring, soon gained the spot where Owen stood ready with his horse, but concealed from the view of the sergeant and his men.

To mount was the work of an instant, and with Owen's assistance, Estelle was placed safely in front of him, when, the horse flying along with lightning speed, there was soon a long distance between O'Neill and his pursuers, the former having taken the road round to the mountains on the opposite side of the lake.

The soldiers being intent on following the supposed *Michael Cluny*, forgot to notice Owen Maguire and Silas Charleston, who quickly disappeared and concealed themselves, until all being once more quiet they could make their escape unobserved.

Even at that moment of extreme danger, O'Neill's unselfish nature showed itself; he kept constantly looking round, fearful for the safety of his faithful follower, and the brave young American who had so generously come to his aid, and who had been warned of O'Neill's peril much in the same way as Owen, only his suspicions had been first aroused by the mysterious conduct of Magin and the visit of the

ragged urchin to the barracks, Silas having been a witness of the boy's cautious look around him as he left the gate.

It is probable that had it not been for Estelle's sake, and the knowledge that his death, or imprisonment, at that time, would be a decided blow to "*the cause*," O'Neill would have turned his horse's head and gone to the rescue of Owen and Charleston. A last glance, however, satisfied him that the soldiers were giving their full attention to his own pursuit and capture, and that, in the general confusion, both Owen and the American had escaped.

But now another danger menaced O'Neill. The soldiers' orders had always been most strict, that in the event of their encountering *Michael Cluny*, he was to be taken, "*alive or dead*." O'Neill had now so far evaded their grasp, that they had no alternative but to have recourse to firearms. Eveleen, who had been watching them, saw what they were about to do, and clinging to Annesley's arm, she cried to him, entreatingly :

"Save him, Armoric ! Oh, save him !"

"What can *I* do *now*, Eveleen ?" he asked.

"Call the men back," she replied, hurriedly. "Quick ! Oh, Armoric ! They are going to fire ! Call—call to them !" she urged, wildly.

"I cannot, Eveleen !" answered Annesley, sternly. "The men have their orders—my duty——"

"See ! they are going to fire !" she exclaimed, half frantic with terror and despair. "He will be wounded, and that poor girl in his arms, too ; he will be taken prisoner. Oh, have you no feeling ? A word from you would detain his pursuers, and give him a chance for his life and liberty, yet you will not speak that word. Oh ! you are cruel—cruel !" she sobbed, as she buried her face in her hands to shut out from her view her cousin's terrible danger.

Annesley was a good officer, a strict, but just disciplinarian, firm and determined in the observance of duty, a man with an inveterate horror of disloyalty, but the truly brave are always tender and merciful, and he could no longer resist the pleadings of Eveleen, which, it must be owned, found an echo in his own heart. He saw, too, that Eveleen was about, in her despair, to follow the soldiers, so, hastening after her,

he gently, but firmly drew her back to his side, and called to the sergeant, who was now some distance away from them.

"Sergeant!"

"Yes, sir!" returned the sergeant, as he paused and gave the order to his men. "Halt, lads!"

Which order was received with great satisfaction, and obeyed with evident alacrity by the Marines, to whom the present duty on which they were engaged was most obnoxious.

"I am here to take the responsibility," called Annesley to the sergeant. "Do not let the men fire at present. And let them keep to the main road, they cannot follow up this daring Rebel, he is too well accustomed to every mountain pass; but they may cut him off half-way, if they keep to the road."

"Very good, sir," cried the sergeant, in reply. "On, my lads!" was his next command to his men, and they then disappeared down a hill, and out of sight of Eveleen and Annesley.

"There, Miss Corrie," said Annesley, turning to Eveleen, "I have done all I can for you. If I mistake not, *your friend* will give the main road a very wide berth to-night, and no doubt he will have made good use of these few moments; he will be out of sight of our men by this time."

"Oh, Armoric! Heaven bless you for this! How can I ever thank you enough?" said Eveleen, earnestly.

"I want no thanks," replied Annesley, coldly, "and, indeed, I am not at all clear that I have done my duty in this instance."

"*Duty!* oh, what did *that* matter when *his* life and liberty were in danger!" returned Eveleen. "It would have been worse than death to *him* to have been taken prisoner. Ah!" she cried suddenly, pointing to the range of mountains opposite to them. "See! he has nearly reached those hills. He is safe! Yet no!" she exclaimed again, despairingly, "he is closely followed by other soldiers now, they are well-mounted cavalry; they will cut him off from the mountain path. Oh, Armoric! he will be taken!"

"Not yet!" said Annesley, who was now watching, as

eagerly as Eveleen, the distant figure of the brave rider, as the trusty horse seemed literally to fly over every obstacle in his path.

"Look!" he cried, excitedly, his hand resting on Eveleen's shoulder, "he has passed over the first hill—there he goes! See how his horse breasts the mountains. Ah! did you see the leap he took just now? Nobly done! nobly done! he will escape yet! the horses of the cavalry are untrained for such work as that, they cannot follow him. He is a brave fellow, that friend of yours, Eveleen," added Annesley, admiringly, "I should not like to see him taken."

For the moment, the young officer forgot all rivalry, in the brave man's thorough appreciation of the gallantry of another.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, anxiously, "the cavalry have dismounted, and see, they are trying to follow him on foot, with their carbines. And Eveleen!—"

"Ah! he is lost! he is lost!" she interrupted, her voice trembling, her face pale as death. "He has forgotten the gorge, he cannot cross that; they will come upon him now; he has no other way of escape, except by going down to the road again on the other side of the hill, where our men will meet him. Oh, Armoric!" she cried, sadly, "nothing can save him now."

The clouds had all passed away some time before, and the moon shone forth like a rare gem in the horizon, a silent witness of the strange, wild scene that was being enacted beneath the halo of her wondrous light, showing distinctly, to the two anxious watchers by the side of the dark, gloomy lake, the figures of horse and rider, and the relentless pursuers, clearly defined against the sky; when O'Neill, having arrived at the brow of the hill, his horse, as if some instinct told him of the danger of his much-loved master, without a moment's hesitation leapt the wide chasm, beneath which the roaring torrent fell hissing and foaming into the lake below, and landed O'Neill and his precious burden safely on the other side.

"He has done it!—he has done it!" exclaimed Annesley, in tones of the most sincere admiration and delight. "Burdened as he was with the girl, too; well done, horse and rider!

There! do you see, Eveleen, some of the soldiers who followed him to the last, now left on the opposite side of the gorge, while others are still only climbing the mountain steep?"

Annesley's face had been turned towards Eveleen while he was speaking, and he was therefore startled when she clung to him with a cry of despair. Her eyes had never left the fast retreating form of her cousin, and she had seen the new danger that threatened him; two of the soldiers who had been the foremost of his pursuers had raised their carbines, and were prepared to fire.

"Armoric! They are going to fire!"

No sooner had the words passed Eveleen's lips, than the shots were heard.

"It has not reached him!" said Annesley, soothingly. "Look, Eveleen! Yonder he goes!—he is out of sight now, he is safe at last!"

"Safe at last!" repeated Eveleen, fervently. "Oh! thank Heaven for that! and God bless you, Armoric, for what you have done this night!"

Annesley and his companion were now startled by a sound near them, as of a sudden plunge into the water, and on glancing in the direction from which the noise seemed to proceed, they saw, to their astonishment, Owen Maguire swimming across the lake, to the opposite shore, where he landed, and climbing the hill with the agility of a goat, soon disappeared from view, in the same direction as that taken by O'Neill. He had tried his best to persuade Silas Charleston to accompany him, but the American having been slightly wounded in his encounter with the soldiers, and not being such an adept at mountain climbing as Owen, decided that he would prefer to return to their stronghold by a more legitimate route.

"There goes *Michael Cluny's* brave and devoted servant!" remarked Annesley, as he watched Owen's proceedings with interest. "He has taken the shortest road after his master; they will soon be safe among the mountains now. I wonder what the young Rebel Chief will do with that poor girl," he continued, thoughtfully. "Who can she be? She is evidently French, but no peasant girl or *soubrette*—of that I am

certain, though her dress would lead one to suppose so." Then, turning to Eveleen, with considerable bitterness in his tones, he added : " I am sorry you have a rival in that gentleman's affections, Miss Corrie."

" A *rival* ? " queried Eveleen, astonished at Annesley's words and manner. " What mean you ? "

" Just what I say ! " replied Annesley, sharply, " Ay, and a favoured rival, too, if we may judge by the young Rebel's anxiety concerning his fair charge. You see he would not leave her in *your* care. How should *you* have liked such a romantic moonlight ride, Miss Corrie ? " he asked, sarcastically.

" I should have liked it exceedingly had it been with one I loved," retorted Eveleen, defiantly.

" You see, however," continued Annesley, in the same strain as before, " that you were not the *only* lady prepared to keep tryst with the notorious *Michael Chumy*. But why should I blame you ?—what attractions have *I* to boast of, in comparison with a handsome young Rebel Chief—(these sort of fellows are always handsome)—with a halo of romance, that in a woman's eyes, ever hovers over such men ? But your mind may rest at ease, Miss Corrie, for the present *your lover* is safe."

The unfortunate idea once having taken possession of Annesley's mind, that O'Neill was Eveleen's lover, soon became firmly rooted therein ; every word, every action of hers was considered by him as fresh proof of her faithlessness. He imagined, and, with the obstinacy which was one of his few faults, held tenaciously to the thought that it was on account of this young Rebel that Eveleen had, of late, behaved so coldly to him, forgetting that he, himself, had been the chief cause of much of the estrangement existing between them. He worked himself up to a high pitch of indignation and jealousy. He even thought, with a certain sense of grim satisfaction, of Eveleen's feelings when she discovered that she had a rival in her new lover's affections, and that rival, to all appearance, a French *soubrette*. She would indeed find that she had sacrificed the substance for the shadow. But *he* would let her see that it mattered naught to *him*.

Such was the laudable decision arrived at by the young officer, after which he grew calmer in mind, and felt prepared to treat his false love with magnanimous generosity and forbearance.

"And now," said Annesley, turning once more to Eveleen, "suppose we leave the romantic and return to the more practical business of life. To commence our descent to sub-lunary matters, will you kindly tell me what I am to do with *you*, Miss Corrie?"

"Do with me?" asked Eveleen in surprise. "I scarcely understand you, Captain Annesley."

"How do you propose to get into barracks again to-night?" he asked, quietly.

"I intend to enter the barracks as I left them," returned Eveleen, haughtily, "and that was through the little door in the wall, at the back of our quarters. There is never any sentry stationed there now."

"Ah! And have you forgotten that the same little door is always barred, directly after tattoo, by the Colonel's orderly?" queried the officer. "No! You are too late to get into barracks by that entrance now, Miss Corrie."

"Of that I am quite well aware, Captain Annesley; but Shilrick O'Toole, the little drummer, promised to keep a look out, and if I were unable to return before tattoo, he was to allow the door to be bolted by the orderly as usual, and afterwards to unbar it again for me. I told him that he would know by just looking outside whether I had returned or not, as in the former case I should place a white paper in a crevice of the old wall near the door, where he would be easily able to see it by the light of the moon. And, that there might be no mistake, I told him that the simple words, 'All is well,' would be written on the paper, so that, when he read it, he would understand that the door need not remain unbarred any longer."

"*Simple words! All is well!*" repeated Annesley, sternly, and standing before Eveleen, with horror and indignation depicted on his countenance. "And do you know the mischief you have done?" he asked. "Shilrick O'Toole, poor innocent boy, will certainly be discovered outside that little door after nine o'clock, and he will probably be sent to the guard-

room and punished ; and, oh ! Heaven knows what his sentence may be, at such a time as this, when the discipline of our men must be so strict ! and Shilrick an Irish boy, too. Oh ! just think to what suspicions of treachery this simple action may give rise."

"Oh ! what can we do for him ?" asked Eveleen, anxiously, terrified at the storm she had unwittingly raised. "I never thought of this, Armoric. You must get him out of the scrape, somehow, if he is discovered."

"That is easier said than done," was the reply. "And you knew," continued Annesley, angrily, "that Shilrick was a *protégé* of mine ; you knew the pride I had in the boy ; and my anxiety that nothing should ever be entered against his name in the defaulter's book, either for neglect of duty, or any other fault. Oh ! why could you not have chosen some other confidant than Shilrick O'Toole ? And now," he asked, as Eveleen stood silently and sorrowfully before him, "how are you to be passed into barracks ? You will have a difficulty in getting in, even by the front gate, at this hour ; of course you will be recognised," he added, angrily, as he paced up and down for some moments. "And your name—the name of our Colonel's daughter—will be the theme of the barrack-room and the mess-table for months to come. Oh, Eveleen ! this is worse than all," he said, sorrowfully, as he paused in front of her, and watched every passing expression on the beautiful, downcast face.

"Cannot *you* pass me into barracks, Armoric ?" she asked, pleadingly.

"No," replied Annesley, decidedly. "Your going *alone* will be bad enough ; if you went in *my* company it would be ten times worse. Indeed if I did right, I should go at once, straight to Colonel Corrie, and tell him *all*."

"And fill his heart with such sorrow, as years would not dispel," returned Eveleen. "Oh !" she murmured to herself as she turned sorrowfully away from Annesley, "if I but dared to tell him all."

"I do not consider that I am doing my duty to the Colonel in helping thus to deceive him," said Annesley.

"You are always speaking of your *duty*," retorted Eveleen, impatiently. "Then why do you neglect it now ?"

"And what may Miss Corrie deem my duty in this instance?" he asked, coldly.

"Why, to see me safely into barracks again," replied Eveleen, sharply. "It is the duty of every soldier to help a woman in distress. Ah!" she exclaimed, starting, as the distant sound of a strange, low wailing cry was borne to them upon the still night air. "Oh! what is that?"

"You are nervous, Miss Corrie," said Annesley, quietly, "and no wonder; you know the old saying: 'conscience makes cowards of us all!'"

"Oh, Armoric!" pleaded Eveleen, "I cannot go alone now—indeed I cannot. I do not fear any *real*, *living* thing; but *that*," she added, shuddering, "*that awful cry!*"

"It is nothing," said Annesley, sarcastically, "very likely some *Rebel signal*."

Again the same unearthly cry fell upon their ears; it sounded much nearer to them now, and just at that moment the moon was obscured by a dense cloud, and they were almost in darkness.

This time even Annesley was startled, but would not own it to Eveleen; there appeared something so weird and strange in the sound.

"There it is again!" cried Eveleen, in horror. "Oh, Armoric! what *can* it be? It is like a low wail of distress and sorrow, yet it is not mortal—not like any human voice."

"No!" replied Annesley, coolly, "it is most probably some unfortunate owl that has been disturbed from its nest by the musketry of the soldiers. Come, Miss Corrie!" he continued, as he turned to her with a low, sweeping bow. "You may command my services until we are within sight of the barrack gate, then you must go alone; fortunately the soldiers were too much occupied in pursuing *your rebel friend*, to notice *you*; but some one is certain to see you yet, before you have done with this masquerading, probably your other admirer, the gallant Dragoon. But come, let us lose no more time, and remember," he added, sternly, "I do not protect you as a *lover*—as your betrothed *husband*. I only give you my assistance and protection as my Colonel's daughter; all love is over between us now. An Annesley admits of no rival in his affections."

"As you please, Captain Annesley," replied Eveleen, coldly. "Oh, Armoric ! my love ! my love !" she murmured, passionately, to herself, as she turned away her face that he might not see the sorrow his words had cost her. "Oh ! my darling ! If I only dared to tell you all !"

Once more the low, wailing *ullagaun* rent the air, as of one in direst sorrow ; this time it sounded still nearer, and was long and protracted, first loud, then soft, again swelling louder and deeper, and at last dying away gradually on the air, in a low, lingering cadence, full of pain and pathos.

Eveleen clung in terror to Annesley.

"Oh, Armoric !" she cried, wildly, "it—it is the Banshee's wail ! I know it ! I know it now ! Ah, see !" she whispered, with an awe-struck expression on her face, and pointing tremblingly to the distant hills. "There is death and trouble coming to us. Death and trouble, Armoric ! And," she sobbed, despairingly, as she fell fainting into Annesley's arms, "it is following in *his* track."

"Eveleen !" said Annesley, tenderly, his eyes resting with fondest affection upon her pallid, mournful face ; "look up, fear not, you are safe with me, dear one. I will protect you with my life. What is it you fear ?"

Some feeling, some strange attraction, for which he could not account, caused Annesley to raise his eyes from Eveleen, to the mountains beyond. The sight that then met his gaze rivetted his attention and held him spell-bound, for the moon once more shone brightly from behind the clouds, and in its pale, golden light the Banshee was clearly visible, in the form of a woman, with long, flowing, snow-white hair, and transparent drapery of a pale, unearthly shade of green, while from her shoulders fell a cloak, or scarf, of the same strange hue, which seemed to cling around, and to float behind her like a silken web ; her hands were crossed upon her breast at first, then slowly, as she glided onward, over the mountain gorge, she stretched them forth before her, with an attitude of indescribable pathos, in the direction taken by Morven O'Neill.

When finally, this weird, unearthly vision having completed its mission, and given its dread warning, seemed to fade away, and disappear into air.

"Is it the Banshee?" murmured Annesley, as he still stood gazing at the moonlit mountains. "Is it the dreaded spirit that is said to haunt our land with its ghastly warning of trouble and death, and sorrow, when they are coming to the head of an ancient house? Or is it only a weird phantom of my own brain? Can it? Oh! *can* it be a reality? Then Heaven help us!" he said, solemnly, as he looked sadly down on Eveleen, who still lay unconscious in his arms, "Heaven help us all, my darling! for there are dark days coming for those we love."

CHAPTER XXIII.

" He'll hae misfortunes great an' sma',
But aye a hairt aboon them a' ;
He'll be a credit till us a'."

BURNS.

It was an awkward predicament in which Captain Annesley found himself, so far from home, and with the unconscious form of Eveleen Corrie in his arms, while to render matters still worse, the clouds became dark and lowering, entirely eclipsing the light of the moon, a white mist that seemed suddenly to rise out of the haunted lake, gathered stealthily around them, and in the midst of the rapidly increasing darkness the rain commenced to fall, not in a light passing shower, but in perfect torrents, in a manner well known to those who live in mountainous districts ; and this was followed by prolonged peals of thunder and flashes of lightning, that appeared to come from every direction at once, and, playing over the lake, turned its dark, still waters into a pool of liquid fire.

What *was* he to do with Eveleen ? thought Annesley, well-nigh blinded with the brilliant flashes of lightning, and distracted with the noise of the thunder. To seek shelter among the trees and thick foliage would be dangerous in such a thunderstorm, while to take Eveleen into the barracks at that hour, and in such a condition as they would both appear ere they could reach home, was impossible. Annesley, however, suddenly bethought himself of Thalia Coghlan. Her shanty was not very far off and he felt sure that she would not be likely to gossip about Eveleen's presence there, and indeed that the poor girl's state of mind ever since the loss of her lover, had precluded her from holding much intercourse with the neighbours, who

were divided in their opinions concerning her, some blaming, while others pitied her.

It is true that even Annesley felt most unwilling to ask any favour from Thalia Coghlan, for he, like Shilrick, not knowing the real facts of the case, considered that she had deeply wronged his foster-brother, and had been, in a manner, responsible for his death ; but in this instance, what could he do with Eveleen Corrie ? That was the question which recurred to him again and again. He had only just come to the decision that there was no other course for him to pursue than to take her to the shanty, and leave her in the care of Thalia for the night, when Eveleen began to show signs of returning consciousness, and ere a few moments had elapsed she was sufficiently restored to be able to stand with the support of Annesley's arm, and he then imparted to her his anxiety concerning herself, and what he was to do with her, also his fears with regard to poor Shilrick, and the dilemma the boy might have been in during their prolonged absence. It was by that time very late, and both Annesley and his companion were wet through with the drenching rain. Eveleen could think of no better plan than that suggested by her lover, and his plan was accordingly carried out. Glad indeed she felt to reach the shelter of Thalia's humble home, where she met with a warm, and hospitable reception from her old favourite, and fully appreciated the tender care, and earnest efforts of the girl to welcome her, and to bestow on her every comfort that the shanty could afford.

With a mind at ease regarding Eveleen, Annesley next thought of Shilrick O'Toole. He intended first to ascertain if the little private door, at the back of the Colonel's quarters was still unbarred, and he wondered gravely, on his road back to barracks, if Shilrick had escaped unnoticed when he went to open it for Eveleen. On his arrival there he found that the door was bolted, and this caused him considerable anxiety.

"Had the boy been prevented from keeping his promise ; or had he been intercepted in the act of opening the door after it had been bolted by the orderly, for the night ?" he asked himself, anxiously.

It was too late for Annesley to seek an interview with Shilrick that night ; he would have returned to his room long ago, with the other drummers. There was nothing for it then, but to wait patiently until the morning. He contrived, however, to make an errand to the Colonel's quarters and to see Mrs. Corrie, when he was able to relieve her mind of all fear concerning the safety of Eveleen ; but being too proud to make any comment upon the very questionable company in which *he* considered that he had found Eveleen, or indeed upon the strange fact of her being out, and alone, at such an hour, he simply told Mrs. Corrie that he had met her daughter, in the course of his moonlight walk, and, as she had been caught in the rain, he had advised her to take shelter in Thalia Coghlan's shanty. Mrs. Corrie was puzzled by Annesley's manner, but made no remark, not being aware of how much, or how little he knew of Eveleen's expedition that night ; and so once more an opportunity passed when the fatal secret might have been revealed. Once more it was kept, with its evil consequences, to bring grief and pain to so many. Meanwhile, however, Annesley unconsciously brought unspeakable relief to Mrs. Corrie's mind, as to the safety of her husband's nephew, by telling the Colonel, in her presence, of the encounter between the Marines and the Rebel Chief, and the wonderful escape of the latter.

We must now go back a few hours, and see how fate had served the gallant young drummer.

Immediately after tattoo, Shilrick dexterously managed to evade the notice of the Drum-Major, and hastily proceeding to the little door, which the orderly had bolted but a few minutes before, he again unfastened it, and after looking around him cautiously, he went outside to search for the paper that Eveleen had promised to leave in the crevice of the wall should she have already returned

"Sure it's here the paper was to be," he muttered to himself. 'Tis '*All's well*' was to be the words writ on it, if I'd be to bout the dure again."

"What are you doing here, and what is that you are saying, you young rascal?" demanded a stern voice, while at the same moment Shilrick felt a heavy hand laid upon his shoulder.

For once, the boy's ready wit and Irish quickness of repartee seemed to have deserted him, and, after saluting Captain Ellis, he stood pale and startled before him.

What should he say? What possible excuse could he make for being there at such an hour and for having unbolted the door, without, in his confession, implicating Miss Corrie? were the thoughts that passed rapidly through Shilrick's brain.

To save himself at the expense of betraying Eveleen was impossible to one of his brave, loyal nature; he would not have so acted even to an enemy, much less would he have broken his trust to the betrothed of Captain Annesley, and his Colonel's daughter. "No, *he* must *himself* bear all the blame, whatever might be the consequences," the boy decided in his own generous mind.

"What paper were you searching for, that was to have the words '*All's well*' written upon it?" asked Ellis, suspiciously. "Come! you may as well tell me at once, for I am determined to know."

Still Shilrick remained silent, his eyes downcast, and his lips tightly compressed, looking every whit as determined as his questioner.

"Whom did you expect to meet, when you were looking so anxiously along the road?" continued the officer, now fairly roused to anger, at what he considered the drummer's sullen silence. "Do you hear what I say? Answer me immediately! Why are you here?"

"Is—is it mesilf lookin' along the road, sir?" commenced Shilrick, in a hesitating manner. "Sure it's only—I mane, och! sorra wan was *I* ixpictin', at all, at all, yer honour, so I wasn't."

"Ah! a likely story," answered Ellis, incredulously. "But what about the paper, my lad?"

"Paper is it, sir?" asked Shilrick, innocently, "Sure it—'twas only a thrifle av a message a colleen was to—to lave there, d'ye see, sir—about whether I'd be to mate her—an'—yes, sir, that's all enthirely," he concluded, hastily, feeling that he was decidedly getting into deep waters, and that the English officer's sharp eyes were fixed upon him searchingly.

"What!" exclaimed Ellis, in astonishment. "You do not mean to say that you have begun to look after *girls* already you foolish lad?"

"Oh, *no*, sir!" replied Shilrick, quickly, being just at that particular age, when he felt that the accusation of, "looking after girls" was a somewhat serious aspersion upon his character and dignity.

"Ah, well!" said Ellis, "take my advice, and let '*colleens*' alone for awhile yet. They will only get you into trouble. Let your brother's fate be a warning to you—there, I did not mean to distress you, my lad," continued the officer, kindly, as he saw the look of sorrow on the boy's bright face, that his careless words had called forth, "I should not have spoken of poor Kerry."

At that moment Captain Ellis chanced to look round, and discovered that they were not alone. A short distance from them, outside the door, stood Jeremiah Stalker, the Patrol, and the same orderly whose duty it had been to bolt the door at nine o'clock.

Ellis could not tell how long they had been there, nor how much of the conversation between himself and the drummer they might have overheard, and he was much disconcerted at the presence of the two men.

It had been the intention of the officer to dismiss Shilrick with a simple reprimand, but, when Stalker and the orderly appeared on the scene, he was compelled, for the sake of maintaining some show of military discipline, to order the drummer to be sent to the guard-room for the night."

"Stalker!" exclaimed Ellis, with a decided sharpness in his tones, "what brings *you* here, is there anything wrong?"

"No, sir; not exactly, sir," replied the patrol, "only I allus considers it my dooty for to keep guard, so to speak, round about these 'ere barracks, most part of the night."

"Ah!—well pardon me for observing that I think our men, consisting of rather a strong battalion, can certainly supply a sufficiently powerful guard for their own barracks without requiring even *your* valuable assistance," was the sarcastic reply of Captain Ellis.

"I *thought* as that young chap would soon get hisself into

trouble," said Stalker, evidently quite impervious to the irony in the officer's remarks, and shaking his head slowly as he contemplated the misdemeanours of Shilrick. "He'll turn hout just such hanother young man as that himperent dare-devil brother of 'isn, he'll come to a lamentable hend yet, you mark my words, sir," added the patrol, triumphantly.

"You be afther mindin' yer own affairs, Misther Jeremiah Stalker," cried Shilrick. "Sure it's aisy knowin' why ye'd like to be afther pathrollin' round these barracks all night, 'tis yersilf that fales ye're safe here enthirely, onder milithairey protiction," was the boy's parting shot at the patrol, as he moved off with the officer, and the orderly, the latter trying hard to maintain a proper expression of gravity.

It was a very slight punishment that Captain Ellis awarded to the drummer, but it caused a serious quarrel the following morning, between himself and his friend Annesley, the latter thinking that Shilrick might have been let off with a reprimand.

Being sent to the guard-room, even for so trifling an offence, entailed the entry of the drummer's name in the defaulter's book, and Captain Annesley had always prided himself on the fact that no fault had ever yet been laid to the charge of his loyal-hearted little favourite.

In this instance, whatever might be the boy's thoughts, or fears as to his own fate, he never for one moment regretted what he had done, and even in the days of sorrow and severe trial that were in the future to come to him, he still remained unshaken, faithful to his trust. To take all blame upon himself, and to shield Eveleen Corrie, his Colonel's daughter, was to him as a matter of course.

"Was she not a woman, and, therefore, to be protected at any cost?" he would have argued—this brave boy, so young in years, yet with a heart of gold, in which beat all the noblest feelings of manhood.

Truly might the poet Wordsworth's lines have applied to him :

"His high endeavours are an inward light
That makes the path before him always bright."

Captain Ellis, looking earnestly into the bonnie, ingenious

face before him, could not find it in his heart to suspect that there was aught of treason, or deceit connected with Shilrick O'Toole ; and grieved indeed would the English officer have been, could he have foreseen the anxiety and trouble that was to fall upon them all, ere a few short weeks had passed, from his most unfortunate zeal in the discharge of his duty as Captain of the day on that occasion.

For months no one had gone near that door after nightfall, and even in the daytime it was seldom used. Strange then was the freak of fate that caused Ellis to take a sudden thought to pass round at the rear of the Colonel's quarters, to see if all was well there, on that particular night, of all others.

An action so trifling in itself, but so serious in its consequences for Shilrick, and for those who felt any interest in the brave little drummer.

CHAPTER XXIV.

“ So soon may I follow,
When friendships decay,
And from love's shining circle
The gems drop away !
When true hearts lie wither'd
And fond ones are flown,
Oh ! who would inhabit
This bleak world alone ? ”

MOORE.

Early one morning in December, a few weeks after the unfortunate occurrence related in the last chapter, Shilrick O'Toole was seated on a rustic stile, not far from the home of Thalia Coghlan, and indeed the thatched roof of the poor girl's now desolate shanty could be seen, in the distance, from the spot where the drummer now sat. The stile separated two fields, that were bare, brown, and barren-looking as a general rule, but on this bright morning they were covered with a thin coating of pure, dazzling snow. The few tall, leafless trees near the stile, and the hedges bordering the fields, were also glistening in the sunshine, with the delicate, fairy-like icicles that hung suspended from the branches.

Shilrick had spent some time in the fields that morning. He had walked round them more than once, he had paced up and down the centre, and finally seated himself on the stile, the interlacing branches of the two large trees on either side, forming overhead an arch of rare beauty, and glittering with white, sparkling frost. Nap, having been brought out for a morning walk with the young drummer, now sat beside him, the picture of patience, his eyes blinking and eyelids drooping in the bright sunshine ; but with ears

alert for the faintest sound, although fairly tired with the pursuit of many a venturesome red-breasted robin, and bonnie blue titmouse that came almost within his reach, and then, "like hope and the bird in the story," having flitted from tree to tree, at last flew away far out of reach, to play a game of hide and seek among the hedges, and high branches of the trees, from which safe shelter their bright little eyes looked knowingly down with triumph and disdain upon poor Nap, who was whining with disappointment. Patience has its limits, whether it be with men or dogs, and Nap's was at last thoroughly exhausted, so he commenced a course of jumping upon, and around Shilrick, pulling at the boy's coat in a most energetic manner, to make him understand that it was high time they were once more on the line of march, but at that moment the most persuasive, or impatient bark seemed to have no effect upon Nap's companion. The stile beneath the trees was a favourite resort of lovers, on the fair Summer evenings, but on a cold December morning it was not such a pleasant retreat, so that Shilrick and Nap had remained in undisturbed possession for more than an hour.

The boy seemed impervious to the intense cold, being wrapped in earnest thought, and with a fever of expectation and anxiety burning within his mind. He was destined, however, not to be left alone any longer, for on turning to descend from his rustic seat he found himself face to face with Thalia Coghlan, the very last person in all Wicklow whom he wished to encounter. He had imagined that she would be at Bray at that hour, or he would not have approached so near to her home. That the meeting was most unwelcome to Shilrick, was easily seen by the unusually stern expression of his face, as he stood silently regarding the intruder on his solitude.

Thalia, however, came forward eagerly to him, with her hands outstretched, then, seeing the look with which he was watching her, she let them fall listlessly, and addressed him in a low, sorrowful voice :

"Oh, Shilrick ! won't ye spake to me, at all, at all ?"

"An' what is it ye'd be wantin' wid mesilf, Thalia Coghlan ?" asked Shilrick, coldly. "What should I have

to say to ye? Troth." he continued, bitterly, "it's not over plasin' the words would be, I'm thinkin. Come! is this the road ye're goin'?" he inquired, holding out his hand to assist her over the stile, with the air and grace of an Emperor, his innate courtesy asserting itself, even in the midst of anger and bitterness.

"There!" he said, when Thalia was landed safely in the next field. "Now, you go *your* way, Thalia Coghlan, an' I'll go *mine*. There's little good can iver be said betwane the two av us now. Oh, lave me!" cried the boy, impatiently, seeing that she still lingered. "Lave me, before I'd be timpted to spake the words I'd maybes regret iver after-wards."

"Sure, I wanted to spake to ye, Shilrick," commenced Thalia, in a hesitating, faltering tone, "I wanted to ax ye about, about the body I heard was washed ashore, some distance from here—is—oh, is it Kerry?" she sobbed. "Oh, tell me, is it my own darlin' Kerry?"

"Kerry, is it?" exclaimed Shilrick, angrily. "An' what call have *you* to be axin' about *him*, an' how is it ye think *he'd* be found after all this thime? Is it yersilf that's iver heard av anywan bein' seen, dead or alive, after they'd fallen 'ondher that bridge? Wouldn't the torrent swape away the finest swimmer in the world? No, no, it isn't *Kerry* that's been found, ye'll niver set yer two eyes on *him* anny moor."

"Oh, Shilrick! why will ye spake so couldly to me?" murmured the poor girl, mournfully, as she stood before him, her face full of despair, her hands clasped tightly before her.

Very different did Thalia appear then, from the bright happy, hopeful girl, who was wont to meet her lover Kerry, in the sweet Spring and Summer, but a few short months before. Her face was now pallid and drawn-looking, dark circles surrounded the eyes, that were once so beautiful, but now shone with a strange, fitful gleam, her lips pale as death, with an indescribable droop about them, that betrayed the pain and sorrow that filled her heart. In truth she seemed more an object for pity, than blame to those who had known her in her happier days.

Thalia had loved Kerry O'Toole with a truth and intensity of which even *he* had but little guessed, though her unselfish devotion might have taught him to know her better, had he not been so utterly blinded by jealousy.

Now he was gone from her for ever, and her sorrow was rendered still more keen by the thought that he had died doubting her love and constancy. What had she to live for now ? she would ask, despairingly, of those who tried to comfort her. Was not Kerry all the world to her ? Was there anything in the wide world that she would not have done for him ? And now—now she would nevermore see him, nor hear the dear voice that haunted her night and day, both sleeping and waking.

Thalia's grandmother, too, had been taken from her at a time when she most needed loving care and sympathy, and thus truly was the poor girl left alone in the world, which had hitherto, despite poverty and every other trouble, been so bright for her, while she had Kerry's love, but now all was dark, and life seemed to stretch before her as a dreary desert.

The sadness and weariness of heart and spirit could be plainly seen in her troubled, but still beautiful, face, as she lingered beside Shilrick, in the vain hope of hearing even one kind word from the brother of the man she had so dearly loved.

All this, however, was scarcely noticed by Shilrick, his mind was still too full of his brother's wrongs ; and in Thalia's manner, and her distress, he could only read regret for her own wasted life, and remorse for the faithlessness that had won for her the contempt and dislike of many who had once been her warmest friends, but who had not been able to shake off the belief in her inconstancy, so much had circumstantial evidence been against her.

It was, therefore, with an increase of coldness in his tones that the drummer turned once more to address Thalia, and to reply to her entreaties.

"What is it to yersilf whether Kerry's found or not ? " he asked, "Is it that ye want to waave the garlands for his grave ? An' then maybes ye'd be wapin' over thim as if ye'd *loved* him, an' been good an' thrue-hearted. Begorrah ! I belave 'tis

the swate flowers that would fade at the first touch av yer decateful hands, an' the grane grass would wither as yer false tears fell on it. *Och, wirra ! wirra !*" he cried, sorrowfully covering his face with his hands, as if to shut out the sight of the girl before him, " why did Kerry iver waste his love, his true, honest heart on yersilf, at all, at all ? "

" Shilrick, oh, Shilrick dear ! " sobbed Thalia, stretching out her clasped hands yearningly towards him, " sure 'tis me heart that's breakin' ! "

" Troth, I don't wondher at it ! " replied Shilrick, scornfully, " Sure it bates me to know how 'tis not ashamed ye are to go annywhere, or see annywan at all ; an' most av all how ye *daw* to come to *mesilf*, poor Kerry's brother, afther the cruel wrong ye done him."

" Shilrick ! will *you* niver belave me either ? 'Twas all a misthake, a cruel misthake. Oh ! why was Kerry so hasty in thinkin' ill av *mesilf* ? " she continued, with passionate emotion. " Hadn't I proved throe to him for manny a dhay, an' why would he doubt me then ? But now he's gone from me for iver, widout wan word av love. Oh, Kerry ! Kerry ! " she sobbed, " if ye had only niver done this dark dade ; if ye had waitid and thrustid in *mesilf*, sure I could have explained iverythin' enthirely."

" Maybes ye could," returned Shilrick, bitterly, " for 'tis yersilf would have had the thime to make up a fine con-vanient story by thin."

" Won't ye listhen to me, Shilrick ? " again pleaded Thalia, and going closer to him in her anxiety.

" Don't come nare me ! Oh ! don't be spakin annymoor to me ! " cried the boy, passionately, as he hastily put out his hand, as if to keep her at a greater distance. " I cared for ye wanst whin I thought ye were throe to poor Kerry ; an' I was proud av his beautiful colleen, but now, now I *hate* the very sight av ye, an' the beauty that's brought so much misery on all av us. Oh ! bad luck to the dhay whin my brother set his eyes on yersilf ! "

" Shilrick ! " exclaimed Thalia, eagerly, and seizing hold of his arm, to prevent him from leaving her before she had made another attempt to convince him of her innocence, " Sure ye *shall* hear what it is I have to say to ye, for 'tis

yersilf was his brother, an' oh ! don't I tell yez that me heart's breakin'. Kerry's love was the light av me life, it was all the world to mesilf. Oh ! what is life to me widout *him*? Is there annythin' I wouldn't suffer, anny thrials I wouldn't go through, if by them I could call my darlin' back to life agin, an' hear him say that he belaved in my love an' truth an' would niver doubt me annymoor."

"'Tis mighty fine talkin' ! An' as to *your* heart breakin' Och, niver fear !" said Shilrick, scornfully, "sure it's a dale too hard for that, annyhow, if indade ye've a heart to break, at all, at all. An' now will ye plase let go av me slaave, Thalia Coghlan, 'tis government property d'ye see, an' 'twould be wrong to desthroy it, an' thim so mighty liberal wid iverythin' enthiirely," added the drummer, with unconscious sarcasm, as he pulled his arm away from the girl's hold.

"Oh, Shilrick !" she cried, sorrowfully, and with a deep, despairing sigh, "I liked to see ye, and to spake to ye, becase 'tis Kerry's own brother ye were, but now, ah ! sure thin I'll niver throuble ye agin, niver, I'll only say that nayther *yersilf* nor *him* nor annywan else in this whole wide, cruel world had the right, or the cause to doubt me, for I niver could be onthru."

"Which manes," returned Shilrick, contemptuously, "that Sheymus Malloy didn't come forward as quickly as ye ixpicted, whin poor Kerry was out av his road, an' so ye think ye'll be afther givin' yersilf the glory av bein' a marthyr."

"Heaven help me ! there's nothing left for me to care for now," cried Thalia, hopelessly, as she moved away from Shilrick, "whin 'tis aven yersilf that would be turnin' agin' me that way, an' not aven listhenin' to what I'd be sayin'. Kerry loved ye dearly, an' I thought maybes ye'd think kindly av me for *his* sake. Oh, Shilrick !" she sobbed, "a dhay will come, though maybes not in this world, when Kerry will know how faithful me heart was to him ; an' I'll be thru to his memory now, an' as long as there's life widin' me."

"A nate spache, enthiirely !" answered the boy, sarcastically. "An' now, bafore ye lave me, sure I'll tell ye *this much* ; 'tis yersilf that's thrown away for iver, a jewel that gould couldn't buy, an' by yer faithlessness ye've lost the

thrust, bravest heart that iver bate in this world. But, oh ! why should I be spakin' to ye at all," he cried, passionately. "Haven't I tould ye I don't want iver to see yersilf, or to spake to ye annymoor ?"

"Thin this is the last sup av sorrow for me," said Thalia, mournfully. "Sure, I thought to hear a word av comfort from yersilf, Shilrick ; an' oh ! if ye only knew how I loved Kerry, an' how me heart must be could an' still for iver, before I could caase to think av the bhoy that was so dear to me, sure ye must fale *some* pity for me ; but I'll not throuble ye annymoor. Heaven bless an' kape ye, Shilrick ! an' may the day come whin ye'll think better av mesilf, an' find how ye've wronged me in yer heart !"

With a deep sigh, Thalia turned and left Shilrick, murmuring softly to herself, as she went on her lonely way. "Sure, I *must* ax Sheymus Malloy to let me break me promise to himself, an' tell Shilrick all, enthirely ; I can't bear for Kerry's brother to think so ill av me."

Shilrick stood watching the retreating figure of Thalia for some moments with a look of disdain upon his face.

"There she goes !" he muttered. "Whoiver would have thought *that* colleen was false, now ? Ah !" he cried, suddenly, as he saw a tall form, clad in the garb of a farmer, hurriedly crossing one of the fields to meet Thalia. "Sure, I thought so. I might have known that Sheymus Malloy wasn't very far off. There he goes afther her," continued the boy, laughing, bitterly. "*Och, musha !* if Mistrhess Thalia Coghlan had only known the sacrit *I* could have tould her this day, if it had been plasins' to mesilf, troth ! I wondher what she'd have said to it, at all, at all ?"

CHAPTER XXV.

“ But they who have loved the fondest the purest,
Too often have wept o’er the dream they believed ;
And the heart that has slumber’d in friendship securest,
Is happy indeed if ’twas never deceived.”

MOORE,

Shilrick was so absorbed in watching Thalia and Sheymus Malloy, that he did not even notice the behaviour of Nap, who, with a series of short, delighted barks, and vigorous wagging of his tail, rushed eagerly forward to greet Captain Annesley, who had been slowly approaching him from the opposite direction, and who now paused to bestow many a kind word and caress upon Eveleen Corrie’s little pet.

Great was the drummer’s surprise, therefore, when he felt a kindly hand laid upon his shoulder, and heard himself addressed by Annesley.

“ Why, Shilrick my boy ! what is all this excitement about ? ” asked the young officer, gazing in astonishment at the boy’s passionate face, the blazing eyes, (at that moment so like Kerry’s in expression) and the fierce menacing attitude.

“ Sure it’s Thalia Coghlan, yer honour ! ” answered Shilrick, passionately. “ ’Tis Thalia Coghlan,” he repeated, as he clenched his hands in anger, while he continued to watch the retreating figures of Thalia and Sheymus. “ Och ! bad luck to the colleen ! sure ’tis the sight av her that does be bringin’ out all the avil that’s widin’ me heart, so it is. There she goes now, wid *him*—wid Sheymus Malloy. Look, sir, d’ye see him yondher ? Troth ! if it wasn’t agin’ the rig’lations for the souldiers to be creatin’ a disthurbance, *I’d* pay him for this, so I would ! ” cried the

boy, excitedly. "Whiniver ye see the wan, 't isn't far off the other is—he's her shadow, bad 'cess to him! An yet she *will* be afther comin' spakin' to mesilf, ontill me very blood boils widin me, an' I do be wishin' she'd been born a bhoy that I could convaniently give her a thaste av me mind, an' the stringth av me arm, to let her know what *I* think av her enthirely."

"Never mind her, my boy," said Annesley, kindly, wishing to soothe him, yet unwilling to check the manliness of his spirit. "I certainly wonder though, that she is not ashamed to come near *you*, Shilrick, after the manner she treated poor Kerry," he continued, indignantly, as he also stood watching Thalia and her companion disappearing in the distance.

"Ashamed is it?" exclaimed Shilrick, disdainfully, "Begorrah thin, Captain darlin'! it isn't aisy to put *her* to the amplush. I niver sane a colleen wid a purtier look av injured innocence on her, than herself."

Often would the grave doubt cross Annesley's mind whether they had not been too hard upon the poor girl, whether they might not, after all, be wronging her in their thoughts. Yet whenever he felt his heart softening towards the pretty sweetheart of his foster brother, he chanced, most unfortunately, to be a witness of one of those frequent meetings between Thalia and Malloy, which again aroused all his former suspicions and scorn.

Truly poor Thalia had no worse enemy than the young farmer, who followed her about like her shadow, and would have made any sacrifice to have saved her from one moment's pain, or sorrow; and even now he thought only of how he could show his disinterested love for her, and protect her against the coldness and contempt of her former friends. Thalia had a bitter enemy, too, in Thaddeus Magin, who was for ever on the watch, and contrived to keep up the ill-feeling against her in the hearts of many who would otherwise have been disposed to be more lenient and kindly towards the unhappy girl. Magin had never forgotten or forgiven her rejection of his magnanimous offer, and had sworn to be revenged on her for the slight she had bestowed upon him, and her non-appreciation of his charms of mind and person.

"Well, Shilrick," said Annesley, in reply to the drummer's remarks concerning Thalia. "I wish that I could believe in her ; but there, we will not speak any more about her, she is not worth it. And now since I have met you, my boy, let me hear what it is you wished to say to me, for my servant told me a short time ago, that you had been asking for me, he thought you seemed to have something very important to communicate," added the officer, smiling.

"Sure, an' I *was* axin' for yer honour," replied the drummer. "An' it *is* somethin' *mighty* particular that I've to tell yez this dhay, sir—Yes, sir!" he continued, hesitatingly, "it's, it's about Kerry, sir."

"Well, my boy, what is it ?" asked Annesley.

"Oh, Captain darlin' ! sure I scarce know how to tell it to yersilf, at all, at all, but—but ye promised that thime, in the last war, whin I—Och ! worse luck that I'd have to be spakin' av it—I mane the thime whin I—"

"When you saved my life, Shilrick, at the risk of your own," said Annesley, kindly. "Is that what you would say ?"

"Oh, sir ! sure that was nothin' moor than the duty av a souldier.—An' thin, isn't it Kerry's fosther brother yer honour is ? Troth its the warm heart I have for ye, sir, if I may be so bould as to say it."

"I remember well, Shilrick. On that day I promised that, as long as I lived, you should never want a friend, both for your own sake and Kerry's. I said that, if at any time you required help from me, if it were within my power to give it, you should have that help, at whatever cost to myself. My boy !" he continued, earnestly, laying his hands on Shilrick's shoulders, while his rich, musical voice grew strangely tender in its accents, as he looked down on the beautiful but agitated face of the drummer, "I do not think that I have ever, in all my life, broken a promise. I am more than ready and willing to keep the one I made to you, when we stood together, you and I—comrades on the battlefield, with none save the dead and the dying around us. Tell me, Shilrick ! what is it you want of me ?"

"Ah ! sure now it—it isn't mesilf that would iver have mintioned the same promise to yer honour," commenced the boy, hesitatingly. "Oh, belave me, I'd niver have throubled

yez for *mesilf*—but—but d'ye see, sir, it's for *Kerry*, an' no, less, so it is."

Shilrick here paused, and leaving Captain Annesley's side for a moment, he peered round cautiously in every direction, being followed at each step by Nap, who thought he was fairly on the move at last; then again approaching Annesley, the boy went close up to him, and whispered in the young officer's ear the startling news, "Sure, sir, Kerry isn't dhrowned at all, at all! He was alive and well last night."

"Not drowned?" exclaimed Annesley, starting, "Shilrick, are you quite certain of this?"

"I sane him *mesilf*, yer honour, wid me own two eyes, an' spoke to him, an' niver a lie in it, sir."

"But why has he kept out of sight so long," demanded Annesley, in utter amazement.

"Bekase its himsilf doesn't want it to be known that he wasn't dhrowned, yer honour, an' he wants Thalia Coghlan still to belave he's dead, d'ye see. Afther he jumped over the bridge that night, he let the torrent swape him so far, an' thin sthruck out for some av thim rocks at the side, he climbed up on thim, an' aftherwards made for the mountains. Kerry watched Sheymus Malloy lape into the wather to save him, but Sheymus didn't see *Kerry*, and so he thought the bhoy was dhrowned."

"Thank Heaven for this!" said Annesley, solemnly. "I thought my foster-brother was too brave-hearted to commit suicide because a worthless girl happened to prove false to him, and—oh, Shilrick! I cannot tell you how glad you have made me—how you have eased my mind! It is, indeed, good to hear that Kerry is alive and well, and that he was not guilty of that great crime."

"Thru for ye, sir!" replied Shilrick, "sure, 'tis yer honour that did be always sayin' ye couldn't belave it av him. He tould me he niver meant to dhrown himself, at all; only he'd be afther lettin' Thalia Coghlan think he was dead, to make her sorry she'd niver see him agin, yer honour. Though why he'd thake that throuble about a faithless colleen, sorra wan av *me* knows at all, at all," added the drummer, contemptuously.

"Well!" remarked Annesley, smiling, "*I* scarcely think, either, that any girl who has behaved in the manner in which Thalia Coghlan has done to Kerry is worth all that trouble, not to speak of the risk he ran of being really drowned."

"But sure I haven't tould yer honour all yet," continued Shilrick, "'tis the bad news that has to come now, enthirely. *Och, wirrasthrue ! wirrasthrue !*" cried the boy sadly. "Oh? Kerry, *asthore !* why should ye have done this?"

"Done what?" demanded Annesley, anxiously. "Tell me all about it, Shilrick. What has Kerry done now, my boy?"

"Troth, sir! he's joined the Ribils, he's wid the 'Bould Bhoys' in the mountains, yer honour."

"Kerry!—my foster brother! joined the Rebels!!" exclaimed Annesley. "Oh, Shilrick! surely you must be mistaken?"

"The sorra wan av me, yer honour," replied Shilrick, sorrowfully, "an' it's himsilf tould me forbye, that the night afther the wan he was carryin' on thim divarshions on the bridge, he wint to the ould shanty to see afther the dumb craythurs he'd left there wid no wan but thimsilves, an' he found some wan had been there before him an' had thaken thim all away. He was mighty plased whin I tould him it was mesilf done it, an' how yer honour had thaken care av Rory, but couldn't look to be burdhened wid the cocks and hins, nor Molly Bawn, naythur, but I'd found homes for *thim* fast enough, if *that* had been all our throuble."

"Molly Bawn?" queried Annesley in bewilderment, "who in the name of all that's wonderful, is *Molly Bawn*?"

"Troth, it's the pig, an' no less, yer honour."

"Oh!" said Annesley, smiling, "I understand now."

"An illigant craythur she is enthirely," continued Shilrick, "an' faith, ye could make her ondhersthand what ye'd be sayin' most as aisy as ould Rory. But sure, sir, it's a dale moor that I have to tell yer honour yet," he added, sadly, with the sudden change of manner, from humour to pathos that forms always, such a marked element in the Hibernian character, "Kerry tould me he'd niver be back to the ould shanty annymoor. It isn't much av a place now, sir," continued

the boy, quickly passing his coat sleeve across his eyes, which were suspiciously bright with unshed tears. "But sure it was *home* to us. Nothin' maybes to thim that has riches in galore, but father an' mother lived there, an' grandfather too, sure 'tis the soil itself an' ivery three, ivery blade av grass that grew around the dure was dear to our hearts. None but O'Tooles has been there for hundreds av years. An' now—now 'tis all different, for it's sthrangers that'll be in it."

Gravely, Annesley listened to the pathetic words of Shilrick, and sighed sorrowfully as he thought that even this boy, young as he was, appeared so deeply embued with the passionate love of home and soil, that seems the natural inheritance of every Irish and Scottish heart, that clinging even to bricks and mortar, and mere inanimate objects, that yearning after any spot, even the most miserable that has once been made sacred to them by the blessed name of *home*, and the presence of those who were near and dear to them.

It is a feeling that enobles, but it is a feeling that may in different circumstances prove either a blessing or a curse.

"Shilrick, lad!" said Annesley, kindly, "do not think any more of this. Tell me, rather, what I can do for you, and let me hear more about Kerry."

"Yes, sir," returned Shilrick. "Sure, he said he'd only be able to see me now and thin in sacrit, an' he mintioned some place I'd have to mate him in the gloamin'. Och! sure it's happy days we had together ontill Thalia Coghlan came betwane us wid her false heart. An' now!" he continued, passionately, "Kerry is a Ribil, an' if he's iver thaken, he'll be thried for a *thraitor*. An' 'tis *her* done it all. Oh, Kerry! Kerry!"

"Come, Shilrick, be brave, my boy; it is useless giving way like this. Let us think only of what is best to be done now," said Annesley.

"If yer honour could manage jist to see Kerry himsilf, an' spake to him. He wouldn't listhen to *me*, at all, at all, but if 'twas *yersilf*, sir, maybes it would be differint. Ye might be able to persuade him to come away at wanst, bafore annymoor pable know he's wid thim 'Bould Bhoys'. Troth, thin, it's mighty grateful I'd be, enthirely."

"Shilrick, you remember your way well among the mountains?" asked Annesley.

"Ivery sthep, yer honour!"

"You are not on any particular duty to-night?"

"No, sir!"

"Then, my boy, we will lose no time, we must go to the mountains this same evening; we can start a short time before sunset. Perhaps we may contrive to see Kerry, at any rate, we will do our best. Have you any idea where he might be found?" asked Annesley.

"Yer honour," said Shilrick, "he tould me a place where he'd be ivery avenin' for an hour or two, about the time ye spake av, for the nixt wake, or maybes longer, an' he said if I could get away, he'd be glad if I'd go to him, an' tell him all that was goin' on, enthirely. But sure," continued Shilrick, anxiously, "it isn't safe for yer honour to go to the mountains, if I could only think av anny other way; if I could get Kerry to say he'd mate yersilf somewhere nare hand it would maybes be better."

"He will not do that, Shilrick; I know him of old, he would be afraid of what I might say to him, and so avoid a meeting if possible. There is but little danger; the Rebels will not be about at the hour we intend going to the mountains, and we must put on our cloaks, so that we shall not be so easily seen at a distance, and at the same time be protected from the cold of this December evening."

"Oh! yer honour, how *can* I iver thank ye enough for sayin' ye'll do this for mesilf?" cried Shilrick, gratefully.

"I shall be only too glad if I can help you in any way, Shilrick. Kerry *must* be rescued, and that *at once*; and who should do it, if not his own foster brother. Mention to no one what you have just told me," cautioned Annesley, "and remember to meet me *here, two hours before sunset*," he added, as he turned and left Shilrick; having several arrangements to make before they again met at the stile, he hastily returned to barracks.

For some moments Shilrick stood watching him, regardless of Nap's howl of despair on seeing Annesley depart, and the drummer, still standing on the same spot where he had been for the last half-hour, having, as far as Nap could

see, no intention of proceeding any farther, or even of returning to barracks.

"Oh, Kerry, me own brother!" murmured Shilrick, sadly. "Sure 'tis mad ye must have been, an' dull to all right falin' before ye turned thraitor an' joined the Ribils. 'Tis the dark sorrow an' throuble must have clouded yer heart enthirely. In me pride I thought I had saved the Captain's life, an' would niver ax for anythin' in return, niver remind him av his promise to mesilf, but now—now I've had to do it, an' maybes I'm ladin' him into danger. Maybes naythur av us will iver see our brave comrades agin. Oh, Kerry!" said the boy, mournfully, "why is it ye did this? An' all for *her*. All for a heartless colleen, that wasn't worth an honest bhoy's thought, much less that he'd sacrifice his life an' his honour for her, when she was so false. Come, Nap *agrah*!" he added, turning to his little follower, "it's on the line av march we'll be wanst moor, darlin', sure its yersilf that's always faithful and throe annyhow."

Nap was most demonstrative in the expression of his delight at this change of affairs, and trotted after Shilrick in the liveliest manner possible, little knowing that it might be the last walk he would ever have with his friend the drummer, or that they might never again "turn out" together, with the guard, at the old gate at Glencree Barracks.

CHAPTER XXVI.

“ And now it is I bid thee pause,
Nor let this tempter bend thy will ;
There are diviner, truer laws
That teach a nobler lesson still.”

ADELAIDE A. PROCTER.

At the time when the discussion concerning Kerry was taking place, between Shilrick and Captain Annesley, the morning sun was shining down upon a widely different scene.

In the very midst of the famous Wicklow Mountains on a narrow path or rocky ledge about midway up the mountain side, stood Kerry O'Toole. He was not alone, his companion being the Yankee, Thaddeus Magin, who was most certainly Kerry's evil genius.

Both men were leaning against the rugged hill-side which was covered with a thin coating of snow.

Magin was, as usual, smoking, but from time to time he removed the pipe from his mouth in order to make some speech, threatening or persuasive, as the necessity might occur, to Kerry, who stood silent and sullen, with his arms crossed before him, and a brow clouded with anxious thought.

The snow-clad mountains towered above and around them, a deep dark abyss yawned at their feet, theirs was a dangerous, uncanny position, but one of the men thought not of this, being too well accustomed to climbing, and to mountain life to have any fear even of the most dangerous passes, while his companion was turning over in his mind whether he could with safety avail himself of so excellent a place and opportunity to be rid of one whom he hated, and whom he feared knew far too much of his evil intentions and schemes. *A*

slight push,—that would be all, and his unfortunate victim would never more be seen or heard of, by friends or foes.

Yet fear for himself, still stayed the cowardly, would-be-murderer's hand. Something in the determined aspect, the powerful, well-knit form of the young Irishman caused Magin to pause ere he ventured to touch him, for he felt that, if by any chance, or false move on his part, a struggle were to ensue, he might have but a poor chance of coming off victorious.

"Wa'al!" he exclaimed at last, "yer don't mean to say that you air goin' to haul off at the eleventh hour, when all the men, an' the Captain too, will be around to-night waitin' to hear yer take the oath?"

"Sure I niver said I wanted to '*haul off*,' as ye call it," returned Kerry, sullenly.

"No, but I guess yer *mean* to do it. An' here hev I been argefyin' an explainin' an expostulatin' with yer agin an' agin till I'm dry in the mouth, yet yer don't seem no nearer decision than yer were months ago. I didn't think yer were such a dunder-head, or I calc'late I shouldn't hev troubled to try an raise yer out of the mire. But yer can't be let off now without takin' the oath, it airn't safe for the rest of the band, ye know a tarnation deal too much, an' too many of our secrets; I guess yer might be bringing the troops around after us some night, and—"

"How daur ye be spakin' that way to mesilf!" interrupted Kerry, indignantly. "Maybes it's what ye'd do *yersilf* though." he continued, contemptuously, "that ye'd be so ready suspectin' others. Sure, if I'd be the bhoy ye'd be makin' out—the wan to turn informer—it isn't *fifty* oaths would be av much account, or kape me from doin' it."

"Wa'al! You hed best hev a care, mister, for we make quick work with *traitors* to '*the cause*' here; but, to return to our frindly discourse, I guess ye're so darned obstinate that the patience of a saint wouldn't hold out agin yer. Hevn't I told yer all the advantages of the movement I hev set on foot? Hevn't I explained how yer'll all be every man his own landlord, doing nothin' and livin' like gentlemen, on yer own land with yer flourishin' crops and yer fat cattle all around yer. And," he continued, significantly, going

closer to Kerry, and using the argument that always seemed to be most effective, "I guess you and that spry young farmer, Sheymus Malloy, would be equals then. Keep *that* in yer mind. The faithless gal, Thalia Coghlan, would soon come round to yersilf agin," he added, glancing out of the corners of his half-closed eyes at Kerry.

The wily Yankee knew well how to play upon the feelings of others ; he had set his mind to ruin Kerry, and the hot-headed young Irishman's jealousy had always proved a valuable weapon in his hands. It was with great delight, therefore, that he learned from Kerry's next speech, and from his evident indecision that his words had not been without the desired effect.

"But troth," said Kerry, "if I take an oath this night, I couldn't say what it is I be bindin' mesilf to do, at all at all. Sure it *would* be mighty plasins' to be aquil wid Malloy," he added, sighing hopelessly.

"Lord, you air a fool!" exclaimed Magin, sneeringly, "Hevn't I been wastin' all the blessed morning telling yer about '*the cause*,' and what the boys are fightin' for, and all the good that's to come of it?"

"Thru for ye!" replied Kerry, quietly, "but sure there's sorra two av the bhoys that's wantin' the same thing, an' troth I wouldn't like to be sayin' which is in the right. I can't ondhershand what it is ye're all afther, whin it's ivery mother's son av ye says differint enthirely. *Ua Néill* tould us we niver *could* be all aquil, an' that it couldn't sthand for a day that way; sure *he* wants us to have a King av our own to rule us—wan wid the rale thru Irish blood in him—an' thin we wouldn't be throdden on dher foot by furrin' powers, an' ruled by thim that cares nought for us or our counthry. He'd like our own ould nobility back agin amongst us, an' the ould landlords."

"I reckon he *would*!" interrupted Magin, fiercely, "that's *his* view of 'Home Rule,' but it airn't *ours*. What better would yer all be then, eh? I guess if yer'll all stand by *me*, as I hev told yer before, I'll make everyone of yer gentlemen of means and position. Every man his own fine mansion, a dozen acres or tharabouts, a couple of cows and a tidy pig or two. Keep *that* in yer mind, mister!" cried

Magin, emphatically. "As for young O'Neill," he continued, significantly, "I guess *he's* been Captain long enough as it is, putting false notions into the boys' heads. *I'll* find means of stopping his mouth before long."

"Ah!" cried Kerry, passionately, as he suddenly grasped Magin's collar. "Is it yersilf would be harmin' misther O'Neill, thraitor that ye are? Listen now to what I'm sayin', for I mane it. Daur to lay a finger on *Ua Néill*, or set anny other wan to harm him, an' begorrah! it's mesilf that'll have ivery bhoys in Wicklow raised agin ye, as sure as yer name's Thaddeus Magin. There!" he continued, scornfully, as he let go his hold of the Yankee. "Go yer way now; 'twill be a mighty bad wan I'll go bail, ye mane, cowardly thraitor. I'll give ye me word, I'll thake the oath this night, as I promised. Ay troth! I'll thake it, if 'tis for nothin' else than I'd be betther able to kape an eye on yersilf, woorse luck to ye!" he added, as he turned to leave Magin.

"Wa'al!" returned Magin, coolly, "I guess it's well for yersilf that yer *hev* decided, the boys were ordered to assemble to-night to hear yer take the oath, an' I calc'late we'd all hev been darned fools to let yer go any longer without doing it."

To this speech, Kerry made no reply; but, as he turned his back on Magin, and was about to precede him along the narrow pathway, the Yankee watched him with a look full of the bitterest hatred and malice, the evil expression on his face, and the lurid gleam in his eyes might have warned Kerry, had he seen it, but unsuspecting of harm he continued on his way, from time to time holding on to the rocky mountain side, as the ledge, on which he was walking, grew almost too narrow to afford a firm footing. Magin followed him closely, and at last, after a moment's hesitation, he slowly raised his hand, and for an instant the heavy club stick he always carried was held over the head of the young Irishman, but it was for an instant only; ere Kerry's instinct of coming danger caused him to look round, a tall lithe figure appeared on the scene, and Silas Charleston, who had been near them for some time and had heard a part of their discussion, but was hidden from their view by a projecting

rock, suddenly grasped Magin's uplifted arm, and hurled him against the mountain side.

For a moment Magin was startled, and gazed with terror at Charleston; he soon, however, regained his usual presence of mind.

"Ah, Charleston!" he remarked, coolly, and with a sardonic smile. "You here! I guess it *was* fortunate, just in time to save me falling over into that cussed hole, I was nearly down that time, if I hedn't put out my arm to keep the balance."

Silas Charleston paused for a moment, ere he replied. He would have desired nothing better than to have pitched Magin over into the abyss, the grave which he had intended for Kerry.

He was a brave man, but he knew that bravado was not real courage, and he felt that it would be nothing less than the former to have attempted an exposure of his treacherous countryman in such a spot, where a fight would certainly result in the death without glory, of one, if not all of the three now met together; he therefore wisely resisted his inclination to avenge the cowardly attack upon Kerry, and to punish Magin there and then, deciding to reserve that satisfaction until a more suitable opportunity occurred, and to bide his time.

It was, however, with a look of the greatest scorn, and in a tone so significant that Magin could scarcely fail to feel, though he dare not resent his suspicions, that Charleston at last spoke.

"That's so! I guess it's well I *was* around to save yer. And *to assist O'Toole* as well, I calc'late."

"What d'yer mean?" demanded Magin, fiercely.

"I guess I mean just what I say in a general way," returned the other, calmly.

The three men had now reached a safer spot, and Magin, glad to get out of the supervision of Silas Charleston, and his quiet but sharp remarks, always so full of significance and truth that they invariably struck home to his crafty, cowardly heart, was not long in taking leave of his companions on the pretext of urgent business.

Silas Charleston looked after him, with a sarcastic smile

on his shrewd, handsome face. He knew perfectly that he had arrived only just in time to save Kerry's life, for, though powerful and brave-hearted, the young Irishman would have had no chance against a blow for which he was quite unprepared.

"I guess if I hadn't turned up then," said Charleston, "you'd hev been sent sooner than nature intended to the 'happy hunting grounds,' as the Indians say, over our side of the Atlantic."

"Thru for ye!" replied Kerry, gravely, "sure an' I thank ye, Charleston; though it's little value *my* life is to mesilf, now," he added, sorrowfully.

"Don't be down-hearted, mister. I calc'late there's a good day coming," said the young American, kindly. "But now listen to me, O'Toole!" he continued, earnestly. "I guess you hev a pretty considerable idea that it's to my interest as well as Magin's to get as many recruits for '*the cause*' as possible. Isn't that so, mister?"

"Sure I've heard that many a thime," was the quiet reply, "an I belave it's thru enough."

"Why, certainly!" returned Charleston, "I calc'late I'm going right away against my own interests now, for I'm going to warn you *not to take the oath*—I'll do more—I'll beg of you not to do it."

"And why?" asked Kerry, much surprised at the earnest tones of his companion.

"Because you'll repent it if you do," replied Charleston. "I guess you'll not be joining '*the cause*' from a good motive—you would be but a half-hearted recruit at best. You hev only joined the boys now, out of a spirit of revenge, and to drown care. It's not the wrongs of *Ireland*, that you air thinking of this morning—it's *your own wrongs*. Take my advice, O'Toole, go home again—use every effort to raise yourself in the world. Shake off the demon of discontent and jealousy that threatens to ruate your life. I believe you to hev been a true-hearted, honourable man—be so still. Let the gal who has deceived you, learn the value of the boy she has lost. *That* would be *my* revenge, let it be *yours*."

"Why is it ye spake that way to mesilf?" asked Kerry,

wonderingly, and with some suspicion. "Why advise me agin yer own intherests?"

"Because I like you, mister, I guess I'd help you if I could. You don't believe me, I see—wa'al! you hevn't had an over favourable specimen of our countrymen in *Magin*—that's so—an' I guess *I* hevn't been over scrupulous, myself—but there air plenty true an' honest hearts across the Atlantic, an' I'll show you now, that an American can appreciate, as well as repay a kindness if he gets the chance. That spry young foster brother of yours saved the life of our Captain a short time ago, and my own too, for that matter, for I cal'clate I was in the middle of the shindy at the last. The soldiers had surrounded us, but your fosterbrother called them off on some pretext, and so gave us time to make tracks. It seemed but a little thing to do, but *O'Neill* knew, and *I* knew that *he*, as an officer belonging to the King's troops, risked the chance of being suspected of favouring '*the cause*,' and so losing his *honour* and his *commission*. Captain Annesley is much attached to you—let me repay him some, for the incalculable service he did us that night, by once more persuading you not to take the oath—nor to listen to the temptations *Magin* has held out to you. Return home as soon as you can, O'Toole, and ease the sorrowing hearts of those who are even now grieving for you."

"Graavin' for mesilf is it?" exclaimed Kerry, bitterly. "Troth, it's not long they'll be that way annyhow. Sure, they belave I'm dhrowned now, why would I come alive agin just to bother thim all enthirely?" he asked, gravely.

Silas Charleston remained silent for some moments, while he turned over in his mind what farther arguments he could bring forward to bear on the case. He had determined, if possible, to save Kerry O'Toole, for whom had sprung up a warm attachment in the heart of the young American; and his firm will and steadfast spirit not being in the least daunted by the non-success of his first effort he decided to try again once more. Turning to Kerry, he laid his hand on his shoulder, and spoke in tones so earnest that he could scarcely fail to impress his hearer.

Kerry looked upon him at first with surprise and suspicion, which, however, soon changed to intense interest,

while Silas Charleston watched every passing emotion on the expressive face before him.

"O'Toole!" he pleaded, "don't be tempted by Magin. He promises what he well knows will never be fulfilled. He is raising hopes that can never be realized. I guess you wonder why I speak so. Listen! I will tell you. Thaddeus Magin was the ruin of *my* life. He will be the ruin of *yours*, if you don't shake off his evil influence. I calc'late I wasn't a much worse boy than the most of them air, until *he* crossed my path. He raised ambition in my heart, but 'twas a wrong sort of ambition. He tempted me, as he is now tempting you. I had a happy home once, and friends in plenty, *he* alienated me from them all. I, foolish boy that I was, half worshipped Magin at that time, mistaking, like many another before me, his crafty, low cunning, for great cleverness, his bravado for real bravery. At last, I guess, the day came when I saw him in his true colours, but it was too late to draw back then. I had lost home and friends, I had grown callous. I left the country with Magin, caring little what became of me, yet still with a lingering hope that he *might* help me, as I had left all to follow him across the Atlantic; but I calc'late I soon found my mistake; instead of raising me to fame and fortune, as he had promised, he made a tool of me to help to gain his own ends. I still followed him—for somehow I couldn't shake off his evil influence. It was useless to return to America, I could never reinstate myself in the favour of those who had once cared for me. My life was spoilt—ruined. O'Toole, you are younger than I am; oh, heed my warning ere it be too late. I do not tell you to crush all ambition out of your heart, for I guess that the man without it is but little worth; but let it be of the right sort—an ambition that will *raise* and not *degrade* you in the sight of those who care for you."

"Is it those who care for mesilf ye'd be mintionin'?" said Kerry, sorrowfully. "Troth! I wondher where they are, at all, at all? D'ye think annywan av thim who used to think well av mesilf would ax to see me agin'?" he asked, scornfully.

"Why, certainly," replied Charleston. "And you hev a brother, O'Toole. I calc'late he's as noble a little fellow as

you'd find around anywhere. There's the gal, too, who proved so faithless," he continued, impressively. "Would you like *her* to feel *satisfaction* instead of *regret* that she chose Sheymus Malloy instead of yourself?"

Silas Charleston had touched the right chord at last, and he would probably have been successful with his pleading, but for the determined firmness of Kerry's character, a firmness that at times verged on obstinacy, and had, on more than one occasion, proved disastrous to him and to others who cared for him.

Slowly Kerry now lifted his brilliant dark eyes, and looked long and earnestly at Charleston, as, for the first time, the true nature of this man was revealed to him—a nature, the latent good qualities of which even years of the companionship and evil influence of Thaddeus Magin had not quite destroyed; then, warmly grasping the American's hand in his, he spoke, his voice full of deepest emotion:

"Charleston, sure if I hadn't given me word, over an' over agin, that I'd thake the oath this night, an' to Mither O'Neill, too, forbye Magin, troth, it's mesilf that would have thaken yer advice; but I can't now, though I thank ye for it—ah! sure, I thank ye for it. May the blissin be on your own life from this dhay an' for iver. Troth! I belave a betther heart than yours niver bate, an' it's the counthry where you come from that has cause to be proud av wan av her sons this dhay. I *must* thake the oath, for I've promised, and I've niver yit broken me word, but Magin's influence—woorse luck to him!—will have no moor power to do me avil, for, sure, Charleston, best an' thurst av friends, 'tis *your* words that'll be to mesilf like those av some bright angel from heaven, an' kape out the demon Magin would be raisin' widin me heart."

CHAPTER XXVII.

“In action faithful, and in honour clear,
Who broke no promise, served no private end,
Who gained no title, and who lost no friend.”

POPE.

It was near the hour of sunset, on the same evening, that Morven O'Neill was slowly pacing to and fro upon a clear though small space on the Wicklow Mountains, the sky was cloudy, but the storm of wind, rain, and sleet which had followed the bright sunshine of the early morning had ceased, and the veil of mist, in which the scene had been enveloped for the greater part of the day, was now disappearing, and a faint glimmer of delicate rose-colour and pale gold was here and there to be seen, casting a bright reflection upon the snow-capped hills.

Morven O'Neill had been waiting a long time, and was at last somewhat impatient. It had been arranged that the party of Rebels under his command were to meet him on that spot, and from thence to march to the place where they usually went through their course of drill, and where the latest recruits were instructed in military exercises. All being conducted in secrecy, and with as much silence as possible, beneath the fair moonlight. On this occasion, however, the “Bold Boys” were nearly an hour behind time in joining their Captain.

“The first—always the first at the place of meeting!” exclaimed O'Neill. “Ah! how can the boys be laggards when there is such glorious work before them? Sure, they are fond enough of fighting when there is nought to

fight for. Not one of them coming yet!" he continued, anxiously looking around in every direction. "And not a sound save the last dying echoes of the wind among the mountains. The storm seems to have passed away, and we shall in all probability have a fine night, unless," he added with some anxiety, as he scanned the sky overhead, "unless more snow follows, which Heaven grant it may not! for the dangers and difficulties that surround us are great enough without that, even the little that has fallen already has in part concealed some of the small secret paths, making them almost impassable to any but those of our band who know the mountains well. It is cold enough for anything to night." And O'Neill shivered as he drew his long military cloak more closely around him. "Are the boys never coming at all?" he exclaimed once more. "I must whistle again."

Taking a small silver whistle which was suspended from a chain attached to the front of his coat, O'Neill blew the signal in a clear sweet tone, but regretted the moment after he had done so.

"It is perhaps scarcely prudent to make use of this signal over much," he mused, "lest some chance wayfarer might hear it, and thus betray our movements; the sound travels far at this hour, and on such a night. There was no reply to the signal, and the boys are not even in sight yet, I wonder what *can* have detained them! Ah!" he cried impatiently, "this indifference—this tardiness, maddens me. Oh, Erin! Erin! will the day *never* come, when thy people with one heart and mind, will be ready and willing to sacrifice *all* for *thee*?"

The time was passing rapidly, and the evening was now far advanced, still the "Bold Boys" had not yet put in an appearance. O'Neill's impatience was at last giving place to the dull lethargy that so often creeps over those who have been long watching and waiting. As he waited there came to his mind the sad, but beautiful words of Erin's bard, words that were afterwards to prove so appropriate to his own fate, had he but known it; and now in a low, musical undertone, he sang them to the old Irish melody known as, "The Fox's Sleep."

"When he who adores thee has left but the name
 Of his faults and his sorrows behind,
 Oh! say wilt thou weep, when they darken the fame
 Of a life that for thee was resigned?
 Yes, weep, and however my foes may condemn,
 Thy tears shall efface their decree;
 For heaven can witness, though guilty to them,
 I have been but too faithful to thee."

"With thee were the dreams of my earliest love;
 Every thought of my reason was thine;
 In my last humble prayer to the Spirit above,
 Thy name shall be mingled with mine.
 Oh! blest are the lovers and friends who shall live
 The days of thy glory to see;
 But the next dearest blessing that Heaven can give
 Is the pride of thus dying for thee."

Ere the last clear notes of O'Neill's melodious voice had died away on the evening air the sound of many footsteps, as of men marching, warned him of the approach of those for whom he had been waiting so long.

"Ah! here they come at last," he exclaimed, in a relieved tone, as a large party of the Rebels appeared on the scene, they were all now, like himself, attired in the dark green Rebel uniform, and were all well armed.

Heading the party was Thaddeus Magin, and among them were, Owen Maguire, Silas Charleston, Tim Callaghan, Andrew Macnaughton, a Scotchman; Felix Thiband, a Frenchman; Heinrich Brühm, a German; Guglielmo Focione, an Italian; also Myles Lenigan, Sheil Casey, Phelim O'Flanigan, and Andy Raferty; the last four of whom carried in their hands green banners, on which the Irish harp, surrounded by shamrocks, was richly embroidered in white silk with the mottos:

"*Erin-go-bragh.*" "Death or Glory." "Onward to Victory." "Liberty for Ever."

Some of the most beautiful of these were the work of Estelle O'Neill, and had truly been a labour of love.

"Hope we hev'n't kept yer waiting long, Captain?" was the careless salutation of Magin as he went up to O'Neill.

The tone of the Yankee's voice was so rude, and the look accompanying the words so insolent, that O'Neill paused

for a moment ere he replied, and regarded the other, haughtily.

"Yes," he returned, "you *have* kept me waiting, and you know it. What may have been your reasons for detaining the men I have yet to learn ; let us hope they were important, for we have no time to lose in idleness and trifling. There is work, ay, and hard work before us all to-night. Are you prepared, boys?"

"Ivery sowl av us, yer honour," cried the Irish Rebels. "Good luck to the grane! The '*good cause*' for iver. *Evin-go-bragh!*"

"*Vive la Republique!*" shouted the Frenchmen.

"Silence!" commanded O'Neill, sternly. "We are *not* republicans, I will have no ruffians of that kind under *my* command. If there *be* any here who are really republicans at heart, let them leave us at once, for I do not intend that such notions shall be put into the heads of my men."

"I guess their heads air filled pretty considerable, with them already," said Magin, in an undertone. "I calc'late I hev taken good care of *that*."

"Ah!" chimed in Andrew Macnaughton. "Ye maun ca' canny, lads, ca' canny! I thocht it was a king o' yer ain ye were fechtin' for ; or ye ken weel it wad no hae been mesel' that wad hae foregathered wi' ye, for ye're an awfu' steerin' lot! an awfu' steerin' lot!" repeated the old Scotchman, slowly shaking his head, as he looked from one to the other of the group, "an' sae far as Magin's promise that ye're a' tae be equals I hae tauld ye lang syn that *that* cock wadna fecht onyway."

"Who asked *you* to speak, old caution?" demanded Magin, insolently.

"Naebody," replied Macnaughton, quietly, "I didna require till be asked, an' what for wad *ye* be fashin' yer thoomb gin I spak or no, ane's as guid as anither here, an' that's yer ain opeenion as ye tauld us yersel', an ye canna gainsay it," concluded the Scotchman, triumphantly.

Once more there were rival cries, and contradictory shouts from "the Boys," on all sides. "*Vive la Republique!*" "No Republic, bhoys!" "The ould Nobility for iver!" "Home

Rule!" "A King av our own!" "Grattan for iver!" "Ireland for the Irish!"

"Ay, a king o' yer ain is the gran' thing, stick by that, an' ye'll no gang muckle oot o' the way, lads," was the quiet remark of Macnaughton, with a look of defiance at the Yankee, between whom and himself there had always been decided hostility.

"There is no time to stand here, quarrelling and disputing in this foolish manner," said O'Neill, impatiently. "The object of one and all of us should be the freedom of our beloved country, from the power of a Government from whom we have as yet received nought save cruel injustice and neglect. As I have already said if there be any among you who have joined '*the cause*' from any other motive, let them at once leave us, for we wish for no half-hearted adherents."

"I guess yer number wouldn't take long to count then, mister," remarked Magin.

O'Neill looked contemptuously at the Yankee, but did not trouble to reply, turning to the other men he said, earnestly ;

"We have, as you are aware, boys, to administer the oaths of our noble brotherhood, to a new member to-night, for Kerry O'Toole has at last consented to join our cause, and has decided to take the oath. He is in the cave now, awaiting our arrival."

"Ah!" murmured Charleston, sorrowfully, "then they *hev* persuaded him after all. Poor boy!—poor misguided boy!"

The tone in which Charleston spoke was very low, but it had not escaped the sharp ears of Magin.

"What is that you air sayin'," he demanded, fiercely, of his young countryman.

"I guess I wasn't *saying* much but I was *thinking* a deal, and wondering when providence would come to the point and rescue an innocent young lad out of the clutches of a villain like ——"

"Like me, I guess yer were going to say, only yer daurn't," interrupted Magin, fiercely.

"Why certainly!" replied Charleston, quietly. "That's so, an' I calc'late you hev put on the cap yourself and saved me the trouble of assisting you."

"Come, boys! no more quarrelling," cried O'Neill.

"Listen ! I am now going to tell you my arrangements for to-night. After we have heard O'Toole take the oath, we shall then march to the usual spot for our evening's drill ; and remember, boys, not a day, not an hour must be lost. All our time must be devoted to practice in the exercise of arms, so that when the great and glorious day dawns, on which we shall strike the final blow, our success may be the more certain. With the battle cry of 'Liberty,' throw your whole lives into the noble cause, never pausing, never resting, until the flag of Erin is floating from every battlement in our own loved Ireland, while the banner of our foes lies crushed beneath her feet. Then, faithful brothers and brave comrades—*then* you will receive the reward of your devoted services in the love and gratitude of every Irish heart."

"Up wid the grane flag. Down wid the mane red rag ! Ould Ireland an' the Irish for iver an' iver, an' far longer nor that ! Hurrah ! Hurrah ! Three cheers for *Ua Néill* ! Good luck to our Captain ! shouted the Irish Rebels," cheering loudly and enthusiastically, in which the others, catching the spirit of their excitement, at last joined lustily, all with the exception of Magin, who stood listening to them with a look of the most insolent contempt and deep cunning on his face.

"Now, boys ! Right about face ; Quick march !" commanded O'Neill, as placing himself at their head, he marched off *en route* for the cave, followed by the whole band.

"How enthusiastic the boys are," he said to himself, thoughtfully, as he went along, "when they are once thoroughly convinced of how deep an import the present movement really is, to every true Irishman. And those strangers who have so nobly come to our assistance—they, too, are affected with the enthusiasm of the others. Our foes say of us that we are poorly armed—that our men are almost undisciplined, but they shall see that we trust not to mere arms and discipline, but to the devoted and courageous hearts of our men. Oh, may Heaven help the right !" he murmured solemnly, his voice full of emotion, and surely it was Heaven's own light that was shining in the soul-lit eyes of this young Patriot and in the brave, earnest face that was now uplifted to the sky in silent, hopeful prayer.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

“ Ah! advice may be wise, my darling,
But one always knows it before ;
And the reasoning down one's sorrow
Seems to make one suffer the more.

If you break your plaything yourself, dear,
Don't you cry for it all the same ?
I don't think it is such a comfort,
One has only oneself to blame.”

ADELAIDE A. PROCTER.

The coldness between Captain Annesley and Eveleen Corrie seemed to have increased, rather than lessened, since the night on which he had found her in the company of Morven O'Neill. At that time, the romantic situation, Eveleen's distress, and all the strange circumstances that followed, had not been without their effect upon Annesley, but, with after-thought and consideration, the old doubts returned, and every trifling action, every hasty word of Eveleen's was remembered, and appeared, as too often in such cases, to afford proof that his suspicions were correct. Naturally, the result of all this was the continued estrangement between the two lovers.

Annesley proudly held aloof, and from being a daily visitor at the Colonel's quarters, he now never crossed the threshold. When he chanced to meet Eveleen, he passed her with a courteous but ceremonious bow. Eveleen had at first grieved sadly at the change, but soon her pride asserted itself, and she bitterly resented his manner towards her, particularly as the English friend of Miss Ellen Desmond made a point of seeing her as frequently as possible, and always remarking upon Eveleen's altered appearance, feared she was griev-

ing secretly about something, and, with many insinuations advised her not to put too much faith in the constancy of men, at the same time being also careful to let her know that the visits of Captain Annesley and his attentions to her friend, Ellen Desmond, were becoming more frequent and regular.

Thus was Eveleen's indignation fairly aroused, and the breach became wider between herself and Annesley. It is true that she might have saved herself much misery had she only confided in her lover. He had certainly a right to her confidence, and it is probable, that after having calmly considered the matter, she might have told him all, seeing that she could so safely trust in him, after his noble action in trying to assist in the escape of O'Neill, at the risk of loss of honour and position,—probably his liberty, seeing that he was, by so doing, aiding a notorious Rebel—even when he imagined that he was protecting a rival. He had done it for *her* sake, and surely had thus proved the strength and the truth of his love for her beyond all doubt. Yet Eveleen was truly to be pitied. Had Annesley gone to her at once on her return home the following morning, and asked for an explanation, all might have been well, but he never went near her, never gave her any opportunity of speaking to him, so that she had not a chance of defending herself, and her heart was constantly made weary and sad, and her mind harassed by the false tales and insinuations of Miss Desmond's friend, while that lady did not fail to make profit out of the coldness of the lovers, and contrived to keep Annesley's mind in a state that was very little calmer than Eveleen's, by making the most of every little attention that she could find had been paid to Eveleen by Rochfort. When truth failed to have sufficient effect she brought fiction to her aid, and so roused in Annesley a fierce and jealous hatred against the young cavalry officer, and an earnest desire to show Eveleen how little *he* cared for her inconstancy.

Indeed at this time Annesley's mind was in a state bordering on distraction, with the thought of his two imaginary rivals, the Rebel Chief, "with the halo of romance around him," and the young Dragoon.

Rochfort returned the feeling of hostility with interest, but he was much too vain to feel jealous, he never, for one moment, imagined that any other man could possibly be preferred to himself, and he was thus spared the pain and the sorrow that were rankling in the hearts of Annesley and Eveleen Corrie.

Poor Eveleen ! Only those who have waited and watched in vain, day after day, for one they loved, and felt the hours and the moments passing, and time with relentless power seeming to carry with it all peace and hope, only those could know what she then suffered.

That which one has never possessed is never missed, but there can surely be no more cruel trial or grief for a woman to bear bravely, than to see, stolen from her by another, the love, that had been all the world to her—the most precious treasure upon earth ; to find the one in whom she had placed such faith change, and grow gradually colder and more indifferent towards her ; to watch day after day, week after week, for a sight of the loved one who was wont to spend hours daily in her company, the trusted confidant who knew her inmost thoughts, her joys, and her troubles. To remember with cruel vividness the well-loved tones of his voice, each loving look and word, each tender caress—the many little acts of devotion and attention which, though small in themselves, yet were life to her as showing his affection. Surely to see these all given to another must cause the saddest sorrow to any woman, and well may one who has thus suffered, in her passionate despair, long, ah, and pray too, for one drop of the waters of Lethe that her grief might be drowned in forgetfulness.

So felt Eveleen Corrie in her sadness. At times the memory of the happy days that were gone would well nigh overpower her with sorrow.

On the morning of the day when Annesley had promised to accompany Shilrick O'Toole to the mountains in search of his brother, Eveleen had undergone an unusually severe trial, and had been driven nearly to the verge of madness by a visit from the friend of Miss Desmond, who, by means of many hints and innuendos continued to make Eveleen understand that she knew Annesley had either made an offer,

or intended to do so immediately, to Ellen Desmond. On that morning, Mrs. Corrie was not able to appear to visitors, being confined to her own room by a slight attack of illness, but most fortunately Eveleen's great friend, Lady Mabel O'Hara, had chanced to be present, and in her bright hopeful manner she had tried to cheer Eveleen, and to prevent more mischief being done. Indeed, but for Lady Mabel's presence, it is difficult to say how far Miss Desmond's friend might have gone with her false assertions and insinuations, but her little ladyship had a quiet way, all her own, of snubbing society scandal-mongers, and often extracting the real truth from them by a course of cross-questioning that would have done honour to a clever barrister. Miss Desmond's friend, like many others, was rather afraid of Lady Mabel, who had a way of speaking her mind freely and fearlessly, and so, when the bright, honest grey eyes were fixed upon her, the lady visitor refrained from uttering the more bare-faced untruths that she would have told to poor Eveleen, who was in misery lest her tormentor should see the pain every false word was causing her, and was yet obliged to sit and listen with her society smile, while her heart was breaking.

It was over at last, however, Lady Mabel having contrived to let the obnoxious visitor understand that she intended to remain with Eveleen for the whole afternoon, and the indefatigable mischief-maker, finding it would be useless attempting to "sit her out," rose, most unwillingly, to take her leave of the two girls.

It was now afternoon, and Lady Mabel and Eveleen had drawn their chairs near the wide, old-fashioned hearth, in which burnt a large, blazing log. Nap lay curled up on a tiger-skin at their feet, fast asleep, probably worn out with the day's proceedings, having barked and growled until he was hoarse at the unwelcome visitor, and had to be carried out of the room by Eveleen, most unwillingly, it must be confessed, for she shared and fully sympathized with her little favourite's dislike, and knew well that Nap's instinct seemed to teach him who were her real friends or foes.

There had been silence between the two friends for some minutes, during which time Lady Mabel had been furtively watching her companion from behind a large feather fan.

She had not heard of Eveleen's moonlight expedition, and her romantic meeting with the young Rebel chief, by the lonely shore of the haunted lake, but she had noticed the estrangement that seemed to have arisen between Annesley and Eveleen before that episode, and she imagined that it had, in part, been caused by jealousy, of which there seemed to have been a considerable portion on both sides, and she knew that this jealousy had been carefully fostered and kept alive by the friends of Miss Ellen Desmond. Lady Mabel, however, thought that the estrangement was not of a very serious nature, and fancied that she had noticed, some months before, a wish for a reconciliation on Annesley's side, but to this Eveleen had never seemed disposed to respond, her pride appeared to prevent her acceptance of the olive branch that was held out to her.

Now, Lady Mabel's sharp eyes had discovered that matters had come to a crisis, and she determined that Eveleen should no longer continue to stand in the way of her own happiness, if any effort of hers could bring about a better state of affairs between the lovers.

"Eveleen!" she said, at last, bending forward and looking earnestly at her friend, resolved once more to try and gain her confidence.

Slowly Eveleen removed her gaze from the glowing embers in the hearth, and as she looked up, Lady Mabel saw that her eyes were full of tears.

"Eveleen!" she repeated, determinedly, "this style of thing cannot go on any longer, that is certain."

"What style of thing, Mabel?" asked Eveleen, listlessly, in her low, sweet voice.

"Why, you cannot be allowed to wear yourself out in this manner. You are miserable and unhappy, Eveleen, and in a great measure you have only yourself to blame. You are storing up grief for yourself, my dear, literally sowing trouble, and will therefore reap a terrible harvest of sorrow."

"I know it, I know that I have myself to blame," cried Eveleen, now weeping bitterly, unable longer to conceal her sadness from her friend. "But that does not make it any less to bear, Mabel."

Lady Mabel was at Eveleen's side in a moment, and seating herself on the arm of the large chair, she drew her friend's head on to her shoulder, and with many a kind, hopeful word, and gentle caress, she coaxed out of Eveleen the greater part of the story of her troubles and her despair.

"Eveleen, dear friend!" replied Lady Mabel, at last, "much of this I knew, or rather guessed long ago. You cannot tell how your looks have betrayed you. You do not know how ill you look, dear, with that sad, hopeless expression on your face. Pride is a fine thing in a man or a woman," she continued. "I can appreciate it myself, but we must not forget that it is a luxury for which we may pay too dearly, darling; and, Eveleen, *love*, good true, honourable love is the most priceless treasure that life can offer, yet many value it so lightly. Oh, Eveleen! why did *you* trifle with that which you had won? By a look, a word, you could, a short time ago have brought Armoric Annesley to your side once more, but now—"

"Oh. Mabel!" sobbed Eveleen, despairingly, "I know it only too well; do not remind me of what I have lost, for now, after all that woman said this morning—"

"Nonsense!" interrupted Lady Mabel, impatiently, "I was not thinking of *her*; I should never believe a word *she* told me. It was only a passing thought—a memory that came to me at that moment which caused me to pause."

"Ah, what was it?" asked Eveleen, anxiously.

"Only the expression of Captain Annesley's face, as he looked at you, on the last occasion when we were all together. Do you remember our long ramble, and at the last, when you were about to climb those rocks, how Captain Annesley held out his hand to help you, and you deliberately turned from him, and accepted the assistance of Mr. Rochfort instead. Eveleen, I really could have shaken you that time."

"But, Mabel, he had been talking so much about that other woman." said Eveleen, jealously, "and insisting upon an explanation, which I could not give him, of a meeting between myself and another, of which you know nothing as yet, Mabel; the secret is not mine—I cannot tell it. But, oh, what is the use of thinking more of this!" she continued,

hopelessly. "It is too late!—too late! I shall never win back his love now; and it was so precious to me—so very precious. Oh, the happy hours—the peaceful, heavenly days that are gone, how quickly they passed! How little I valued them at the time, but now—"

"Ah, dear Eveleen!" said Lady Mabel, thoughtfully, "it is ever thus—

"The sweetness that pleasure hath in it,
Is always so slow to come forth,
That seldom, alas, till the minute
It dies, do we know half its worth."

"And it is our happiest moments that pass most fleetly away.

"Ah! never doth time travel faster,
Than when his way lies among flowers,"

she sighed, as she once more relapsed into silence, and sat dreamily gazing into the fire, for Lady Mabel was not without a love affair of her own, and the fairy Prince of *her* dreams bore a strange resemblance to the honest, blue-eyed Lieutenant of Marines, called by the unromantic name of Digby.

"Ah! who is that?" cried Eveleen, suddenly, and rising hastily, as a knock was heard at the outer door. "No more visitors I hope."

Nap eagerly sprang to his feet with a delighted bark and rushing across the room stood wagging his tail vigorously, and pushing his nose under the door, a sure sign that, this time, the visitor was a welcome one.

Lady Mabel had no time to reply to Eveleen's last words ere the door was thrown open, and, to the surprise of both girls, Captain Annesley himself entered. He bowed with equal courtesy to Lady Mabel and Eveleen, and the closest of observers could not have told that the young officer had a greater preference for one than for the other. He was silent for an instant as if he scarcely knew what to say, but the act of receiving Nap's warm greeting, and the preservation of the gold lace on his coat from the energetic scraping of Nap's paws, served to lessen the awkwardness of this his first visit

to Eveleen since his long absence, and the encounter with Morven O'Neill.

Eveleen, her distress of the morning seemingly forgotten, stood before him pale and proud once more. Her manner, and her reception, chilled Annesley, and with a few cold words of greeting to her, and a courteous acknowledgment of some remark made to him by Lady Mabel, he hastened to explain that he wished particularly to see Colonel Corrie.

"Oh!" replied Eveleen, coldly, "I thought you knew that my father was never to be found at home at this hour; but probably you have forgotten our habits and ways, as you have been such a stranger lately. Will you not be seated, and wait awhile;" she continued in her most stately manner.

Here was a promising commencement to an interview for which Eveleen had been so long hoping and praying, thought Lady Mabel anxiously, as she watched the lovers with eyes full of sympathy.

"Thanks," returned Annesley, hesitating, "I—that is, I am not sure if I have time this afternoon—indeed—"

How matters might have progressed at this meeting, or what would have been the conclusion of Annesley's most unfortunate speech was never known, for at that moment Mrs. Corrie's maid entered the room with a message from her mistress, to the effect that she wished to speak to Eveleen for a few minutes.

Annesley hastened to open the room door for Eveleen, an action which she unfortunately misunderstood and considered that he was showing eagerness to get rid of her, she therefore made him a sweeping curtsey in passing, as she said, somewhat bitterly:

"Excuse me, Captain Annesley, I am sure that Lady Mabel will prove a far more entertaining companion than myself."

"Eveleen!" said Lady Mabel, in a low voice, as she hurried after her friend to the door, "let me go, dear. I can explain to Mrs. Corrie. Oh, you foolish girl!" she added. "Can't you see that—"

"Yes, I see perfectly," interrupted Eveleen, haughtily, and in the same low tones. "He wishes to see *Colonel Corrie*—well! he can wait until Colonel Corrie returns."

Sorrowfully Lady Mabel watched Eveleen walk proudly up the stairs, and then with a sigh, slowly returned to Annesley. Had she remained but a moment longer in the hall she might have seen Eveleen pause at the door of her mother's room, as, with a low, stifled sob, she buried her face in her hands, and moaned despairingly.

"It is not to be!—He cares nothing for me now, and I shall never again know happiness in this world. Ah! why is it—how is it that I have lost his love! Oh, Armoric, Armoric! for one brief moment I thought that you had come back to me. Oh! the cruel, the bitter disappointment!" she sobbed.

It was some minutes ere Eveleen was able to regain sufficient composure to enter her mother's room, and, when she did so, her face was so pale and drawn, and her eyes so heavy with tears that Mrs. Corrie commenced to question her anxiously.

Meanwhile, Lady Mabel had been making the most of her time with Annesley; there was no time like the present, she thought, she might never again have such another opportunity, so, on returning to the drawing-room, she went up to him, and in her usual straightforward manner asked him the direct question: "Captain Annesley, what *is* the cloud which has arisen between you and Eveleen?"

"Upon my honour, Lady Mabel, I can scarcely tell you," replied Annesley, with a short mirthless laugh, "perhaps your friend, Miss Corrie, can explain," he added, bitterly.

"No, you cannot tell *me*," returned Lady Mabel, quietly, "but I can tell *you*. It has been caused by nothing more nor less than your own obstinacy, and Eveleen's pride. Oh!" she continued, coolly, "you need not frown at me, and it is no use your looking towards the door, I am determined that you shall listen to me, and hear all that I have to say before you leave this room."

Faithfully and nobly did Lady Mabel plead her friend's cause, and was, withal, careful to impress upon Annesley that he was not altogether blameless himself.

He had been wont to treat the Lady Mabel O'Hara with a certain polite indifference, a gentle indulgence, such as he might have bestowed upon a wayward child; he had hitherto

considered hers somewhat of a light, butterfly nature, and had wondered in his own mind how it was that Eveleen, who often was of such an earnest and emotional character, could have formed such a close and dear friendship with one so opposite in every way. Now, however, the warm, womanly heart of Lady Mabel was revealed to him, and it was with the most sincere respect and admiration, that he looked upon the pretty girl before him, whose honest eyes were raised to his with such anxious inquiry.

"And you will think of what I have been saying, will you not?" she again pleaded, earnestly.

"Indeed I shall, Lady Mabel," replied Annesley, the stern expression on his face relaxing into a bright smile. "I thank you for your disinterested kindness, and admire you for your devotion to your friend's cause."

"Oh!" answered Lady Mabel, laughing, "I am not in the least disinterested—I do assure you—quite the reverse. I had been looking forward to a long visit to England when Eveleen was married, and I feared that you were going to disappoint my hopes."

"I trust not," said Annesley, smiling, "rest assured that your welcome would be warm and sincere indeed, and I hope it may not be long ere it has to be bestowed."

"Thanks, Captain Annesley," returned Lady Mabel, "but you see I could not leave Ireland while our people are in trouble, I am, I think, able to do some little good in the way of soothing the excitement of the Boys, and talking over the colleens among our tenantry and immediate neighbours. But when peace is restored and our country quiet once more—when dear old Erin is an Independent Kingdom, and we have that King of our own—I think that is partly what we have been fighting for, is it not? I never could quite make out—and how we are ever to contrive to support his Majesty (when we *have* got him) in fitting pomp and style, I cannot tell. However, that will be left for wiser powers to decide. I should like to see England;" she continued, thoughtfully, "but I do not think I should care much for the English. I have not liked the most of them, whom I have met, especially Lieutenant Rochfort, that impertinent and conceited young cavalry officer."

"But I am sure you would make an exception in favour of poor Digby, would you not?" asked Annesley, with a mischievous gleam in his eyes.

"Mr. Digby!" said Lady Mabel, blushing and smiling. "Well, yes! but you see *he* is not *all out* English. His mother was a Scotchwoman, and belonged to an old Jacobite family—*they* wanted a King of their own, too, their 'Bonnie Prince Charlie,' and small blame to them, they 'wouldn't be throdden on dher foot by furrin powers,' as your poor misguided foster-brother used to say. By-the-way, how is that protégé of yours progressing, the little drummer with the glorious face and the brave heart? Do you think he is likely to remain loyal, when he is among so many friends who favour the Rebels?"

"I should feel grieved, indeed, if he did not prove loyal and true, Lady Mabel, as I have had much to do with his training," said Annesley.

"And have made him the noblest little specimen of a British soldier that ever wore the King's uniform," returned Lady Mabel, warmly; "but I must leave you now, Captain Annesley," she added, "I want to see Mrs. Corrie. Do not go—I intend to send Eveleen to you, and," she continued, earnestly. "Oh! do not forget what I have said; for *her* sake, for *your own*, think well ere you wreck the happiness of both your lives."

"You are a faithful friend, Lady Mabel," said Annesley, smiling, as he kindly pressed her hands in his, "it will not be your fault if you fail in the character of peacemaker."

When left to himself, Annesley walked towards the window, and stood there looking out across the barrack square, but it was with unseeing eyes that he gazed upon the scene before him. His thoughts were travelling back through the months that had passed, and that had proved so dreary for himself, so unutterably sad for Eveleen.

He acknowledged, in a measure, that Lady Mabel had spoken truthfully when she had blamed him as well as Eveleen; still his memory would persistently return to the night of the strange tryst which he had witnessed, and the evident intimacy that existed between his betrothed and the young Rebel Chief. That mystery had never been explained,

and on that very night, before leaving Eveleen in the care of Thalia Coghlan he had asked the former to enlighten him as to the identity of O'Neill, and the reason for her secret meeting with him, at such an hour, and so far from her home; but Eveleen still maintained an obstinate silence. Only once since then he had made another attempt to gain her confidence but failed, and from that time Annesley had never spoken to her, his pride always standing in the way of his again pleading for an explanation to which he considered, and with reason, that he was justly entitled, but which Eveleen determinedly refused to give.

He had thought long and earnestly before deciding to call at Colonel Corrie's quarters again, but a strange yearning to see and to speak to Eveleen once more had come over him, and was too strong for even his proud heart to resist. He *must* see her, he thought, ere he started on the expedition to the mountains with Shilrick. There might be no danger, still it was not a particularly safe errand upon which they were about to start that evening. They might possibly meet with the Rebels, and the encounter would naturally be the reverse of friendly, between the "Bold Boys," and an officer and drummer belonging to the forces of their enemies. He and Shilrick might be taken prisoners, or they might never live to return to the barracks, and their comrades again; all this, and much more passed rapidly through Annesley's mind, and he felt that he could not leave Eveleen thus, without seeing her, and in his own heart bidding her farewell, lest they might never more meet. He had no intention of telling anyone of his determination to go to the mountains, least of all Colonel Corrie, whom he knew would use every effort to prevent him from carrying out so wild a project.

Lady Mabel had not long left the room ere the door was opened softly, and Eveleen once more appeared before Annesley. For a moment she paused in the centre of the room, but he went forward to her, holding out both his hands.

"Eveleen!"

"Armoric," she said, gently, her wonderful hazel eyes, so like O'Neill's, raised to his, with a world of love and tenderness in them, "Mabel told me that—that you wanted me."

"And so I did," he replied, then continued eagerly and impetuously, "Eveleen, tell me, now, what is this dark shadow that has kept us apart so long, robbing our lives of sunshine. My darling, it may be that a few words from you could clear away the mist that threatens to cloud our lives for ever, and harden our hearts against each other. I come now to ask, to pray of you to speak those words."

"Armoric! I know what you mean," she returned, hesitatingly. "But—ah, dear! I cannot,—oh! do not ask me," she cried, covering her face with her hands, to shut out the loving, pleading eyes gazing so tenderly into hers, lest she should be tempted to yield to his wishes.

"Ah!" exclaimed Annesley, haughtily. "You still hesitate! Well, be it so. Oh! fool that I was to stoop to plead to you again!" he continued, sternly. "Your love for me must be poor indeed—your trust still poorer, when you can thus prefer to keep your paltry secret, at the cost of my life's happiness, and your own."

"Oh, Armoric! indeed it is not that," she answered, despairingly. "My love! my love! Ah, why will you not trust me? Only wait—let me think it over."

"There is no time for that now, Eveleen. I tell you that the shadow of this wretched secret must be swept away now. Ay, *at once!*" he repeated, passionately, "or we part this day, never more to meet as lovers. And listen, Eveleen Corrie! the words I speak now may be words of farewell. I am going—"

"Ah!" exclaimed Eveleen, her hands clinging tightly to his, her face pale to the lips with sudden fear. "Not to the war—not to the *East*, Armoric?"

"Not so far as that, certainly," he replied, coldly, "not out of Wicklow, but the expedition on which I am going may prove a perilous one. But this can scarcely matter much to *you*, and I can tell you no more at present. Why should I not have *my* secret too?" he asked, bitterly. "You will hear no more until I return to barracks, or until news of my fate are brought to you through other sources. I could not go without seeing you, Eveleen," he continued, in a more tender tone, "I wished that your face might be the last memory I had to carry with me, and I hoped that our meeting might

have ended differently. But fate has evidently destined that our paths through life shall not be together. Eveleen, have you no kind words for me, ere I leave you—perhaps for ever.”

“Armoric!” she commenced, her voice trembling with emotion, her hands still clinging around his arm, as if she would keep him by her side for ever.

Annesley waited anxiously for her next words, but Eveleen could say no more, it was as though the very depth of her feeling kept her silent. Could her lover have read the thoughts that were in her heart at that moment, he must surely have been content, and all would have been well between them; but he most unfortunately attributed her silence to coldness, and before he could again speak to her, there sounded a loud, sharp knock at the door, which was followed by the entrance of Finch—announcing Lieutenant Rochfort.

There could not have been an interruption so disastrous, nor an entry so inopportune as that of the young cavalry officer at such a moment. Eveleen, being anxious to cover the awkwardness of the situation in which he had found herself and her lover, and to hide her emotion, turned quickly to greet the newcomer with a few light words, which Annesley again misinterpreted, and, considering in his own mind that there appeared undue eagerness in her manner on the entrance of the much-hated Rochfort, and that she was giving his rival a warmer welcome than she had accorded to him, in his usual impetuous manner went hastily up to her, and bidding her a courteous, but cold farewell, bowed to Rochfort, and hurried from the house, leaving Eveleen standing at the window, and gazing after him in silent wonderment and despair.

It was long before her visitor could secure her attention, and, indeed, all through his unfortunate visit the poor girl scarcely knew what he was saying to her; his voice sounded far away, his words meaningless; while she sat looking as if turned to stone. At last, (and it seemed to Eveleen that he must surely have been there for hours) Lieutenant Rochfort took his leave.

Fortunately for her he was obliged to return to his own

barracks by a certain time, or he would not have departed so soon.

Lady Mabel had not been aware of the appearance of this unwelcome third party on the scene, nor did she imagine that Annesley had left ; she had been engaged in an interesting conversation with Mrs. Corrie, in which the mother's hopes had been raised that a reconciliation would take place between Annesley and Eveleen, and that she would be able to rejoice in the happiness of her dearly-loved daughter, who had been grieving so long for the loss of the one who would for ever hold her heart in his keeping.

Lady Mabel and Mrs. Corrie were disturbed in the middle of their conversation, and plans for the future, by the sound of melancholy howling proceeding from the room below, and on Lady Mabel hastening down-stairs to ascertain the cause, she found, to her surprise and consternation, that Eveleen was alone ; she was lying on the couch with her face buried among the cushions, and was sobbing as though her heart were broken ; while Nap sat up, straight and rigid, at the foot of the couch, his head elevated, and ears back, howling dismally at the whole pitch of his voice, in very sympathy for his mistress, and not without some disappointment on his own account, for on the arrival of Annesley he had imagined that a long walk might be the result of the reappearance on the scene of this, one of his especial friends, but alas ! poor Nap's hopes were also nipped in the bud.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"What softened remembrances come o'er the heart,
In gazing on those we've been lost to so long !
The sorrows, the joys, of which once they were part,
Still round them, like visions of yesterday, throng
As letters some hand hath invisibly traced,
When held to the flame will steal out on the sight,
So many a feeling, that long seemed effaced
The warmth of a meeting like this brings to light."

MOORE.

The rays of the setting sun fell like a golden glory upon the Wicklow Mountains, now covered with glittering snow, casting strange lights and shadows among the many crevices and dangerous passes. It was in one of the most desolate, yet grandest of these, that Captain Annesley and the drummer now found themselves.

"Well, Shilrick?" exclaimed the former, after an anxious glance at the scenery by which they were surrounded. "I wonder how long we have been wandering among these wild hills, I should think it must be two hours at the very least, the sunset will soon be fading, and then the gloaming will be upon us."

"Sure 'twas so misthy enthirely, sir," said Shilrick, "an' wid the slaat an' the dhriftin' snowflakes flyin' into me two eyes, faith 'tis near blinded I was, an' somehow it's mesilf must have missed the direct path; but I belave 'tis right enough we are now, yer honour," he added, yet with considerable doubt in his own mind, as his eyes followed the direction of the officer's and took in all the lonely wildness of their surroundings. "Yes, sir," he continued, hesitatingly, "sure I think 'tis hereabouts that Kerry said

he'd always be, near this thime av an avenin', in case I'd be able to come to him."

"You *think*, Shilrick!" said Annesley, anxiously. "I really wish you were quite sure, my boy; it is certainly not very pleasant to be lost among these mountains at night-fall."

"Troth, it wouldn't be aisy for mesilf to be lost among *these* same mountains, yer honour," replied the drummer, confidently, "but I do be wondherin' if Kerry will come;" he added, as he looked around, in some anxiety. "Sure, I hope 'tis not for nothin' we've come here this avenin'."

"Well, Shilrick," replied Annesley, resignedly, "it was the only thing we could do, and so we must just hope for the best."

"Och!" exclaimed Shilrick, suddenly, as he discovered, at some distance, a tall form slowly approaching them, clad in long black cassock, shovel hat, and with a heavy rosary of ebony and gold suspended from the waist. "Sure if here isn't his riverince, Father Bernard, an' no less. See, yer honour! 'tis himsilf that's climbin' up yondher hillside to get to us."

Annesley, on looking in the direction indicated by Shilrick, found that the boy was right, and that it was indeed good old Father Bernard—the priest belonging to that part of Wicklow—who was now wending his way slowly and cautiously towards them. He was distinguished and intellectual-looking, with snow-white hair, and of a calm, benevolent cast of countenance, which, certainly, in his case, was a true index to his character, for he was beloved and respected by those who knew him, of all sects and persuasions. Too numerous to mention were the acts of generosity and unselfish devotion that could have been told of Father Bernard; devotion to his flock among the greatest dangers and difficulties; he was ever among them, ready to help, to cheer, and to advise, and by his calm judgment and earnest entreaties, he had saved many a wild, reckless, hot-headed young man from rashly joining the Rebel cause, and travelling in the path that he could foresee would lead but to death or ruin.

"Why, Captain Annesley!" exclaimed the priest, in utter

astonishment, as he came closer to the young officer and his companion, "*you here ?* "

"Yes, Father Bernard," replied Annesley, "and, indeed, there is scarcely any wonder that you should be surprised to see us here, and at such an hour."

"And Shilrick O'Toole, also!" cried the priest, wonderingly, as he caught sight of the drummer behind Annesley. "What have you been doing, and why are you here, Captain?"

"My boy," said Annesley, turning to Shilrick; "shall I explain all to Father Bernard?"

"Sure, yer honour," was the delighted reply, "'tis his riverince that's the very wan to help us, he's always mighty good at givin' advice, an' maybes it's himsilf that'll tell us what to do *now*."

"We have been wandering about these mountains for the last two hours, sir, and unfortunately lost our way," said Annesley, addressing Father Bernard.

"But why come here at all?" was the surprised question. "Pardon me, Captain Annesley, if I say, that unless you came here on duty, or had some very good cause for doing so, it was the height of daring and imprudence for you and this boy, brave though I know you both to be, to venture into the very stronghold of the Rebels."

"I know it, Father, but I came to see my foster brother, Kerry O'Toole."

"Kerry O'Toole!" repeated the priest, in an amazed tone, and looking at the young officer as if he thought he must surely have taken leave of his senses. "*You came to see your foster brother, Kerry O'Toole?*" he asked again. "Pray explain, Captain, I do not understand."

"Kerry was not drowned, as we supposed," replied Annesley, "but, oh, Father," he added, sorrowfully, "he has joined the Rebels, and——"

"Impossible!" exclaimed Father Bernard.

"Alas! it is only too true, sir," answered Annesley.

"When did you hear of this?"

"I only heard this morning, but Shilrick heard of it last night."

"Tell me all about it, my boy," said the priest, kindly, laying his hand on the drummer's shoulder.

"'Twas not ontil last night I knew that Kerry was alive an well, yer riverince. He didn't mane to dhrown himself, at all, at all. He only made belave he'd done it, just to decaive Thalia Coghlan, an' let her see she'd lost him, en-thirely," replied Shilrick, "woorse luck to the false-hearted colleen!" he murmured, in low, passionate tones, to himself, as he turned away from Father Bernard, his hands clenched, his lips tightly compressed, while he used every effort to keep under control the fierce resentment that would always rise up within his heart at the very mention of Thalia Coghlan's name.

"Well, Shilrick," said Father Bernard. "Sure, you bring me good news, and bad, at the same time. But Kerry still lives, he has not committed the terrible crime of which we feared that he was guilty; and as for his quarrel with Thalia, well—well—we will soon make *that* all right again, my boy."

"Troth, 'tis mighty plased I was to see him agin, yer riverince," answered Shilrick. "But, *och, faraoir! faraoir!*" he cried, mournfully; "to think he should have joined the Ribils, an' that it's me own brother is wid the 'Bould Bhoys', this minute. Bad 'cess to thim for the thraitors that they are, persuadin' an' mulvatherin' an honest, dacent bhoys like Kerry to join thim."

"You see, Father," said Annesley, "poor Shilrick is such a loyal young soldier, that he is almost broken-hearted at the thought of Kerry having joined these Rebels."

"I do not wonder at it, Annesley," replied the priest. "But cheer up, Shilrick my boy, we will see what can be done. Has Kerry taken the oath yet?"

"Oh, yer riverince!" cried Shilrick, with a look of horror upon his expressive face, "sure it's mesilf had forgotten that en-thirely. Ochone! I'm feared 'tis too late we are in findin' him; he'll niver lave, he *can't* lave thim, wanst he's thaken the oath; for, if he did," added the boy, gravely, "if he did, yer riverince, 'tis the Bhoys would shoot him as a thraitor to '*the cause*.'"

"I never thought of this;" said Annesley, anxiously, "but, Shilrick, we will do our best—we *may* be in time yet to save him from taking this last fatal step. If he would only come here, as he promised, all might be well."

"Do you intend, then, to try and persuade Kerry to leave the Rebels, Captain Annesley," asked Father Bernard.

"Yes, sir ! if possible," replied the officer.

"But do you think he will listen to you ?" again questioned the priest. "Are you and this boy not incurring grave danger for what may after all be a vain and fruitless attempt ? I know your foster brother so well, Annesley, there are no words that would express the strength of his will, or his fatal obstinacy, when once he has taken an idea into his head. You might, for the amount of effect you would have upon them, speak to the rocks around you, or attempt to stem the mountain torrent on its downward course. Take my advice, return to barracks, and leave *me* to seek out Kerry O'Toole. I am comparatively safe here, 'the Bhoys' will not interfere with me. How it is that Kerry has contrived to keep out of my sight so long I cannot imagine."

"Father, I thank you for the anxiety you have so kindly shown on our behalf, and for your advice," answered Annesley. "But," he continued, smiling, "I fear that I too have my own share of firmness of purpose—call it obstinacy if you will, sir. Having once determined to use every effort to rescue my foster brother from committing this, the finishing act to his folly, I could never forgive myself were I to draw back now, and possibly lose the chance of saving him from a traitor's doom."

"An' oh, yer riverince !" said the drummer, earnestly, "sure, if there's annywan in the whole wide world, that'll move Kerry, 'tis his honour the Captain ; but troth it's himsilf that *is* mighty firm wanst he's thaken anny notion into his head," added the boy, doubtfully.

"Well !" returned Father Bernard, "I do indeed trust that you may succeed in seeing Kerry, and inducing him to leave these lawless men, and to return to his home. And now, Captain Annesley, I fear I can tarry no longer with you here. I must proceed on my way, or I shall scarcely be able to reach my destination, and return home before darkness sets in. I am going to visit some of my people who are very ill ; they live in those lonely cabins far up among yonder wild hills. As I was on my way thither,

seeing two people up here, evidently wearing the Royal uniform, I turned off my path to speak to whoever the wayfarers might chance to be, and to find out what could have brought them here, and at such an hour, when I discovered, to my astonishment, that those whom I was approaching were none others than yourself, Captain Annesley, and Shilrick O'Toole. Look!" he added, pointing to two or three desolate-looking habitations, from the chimneys,—or rather holes in the roof which had to answer that purpose—out of which faint lines of smoke were curling this being the only sign to betoken that they were dwelling-places, "Do you see those tiny specks far in the distance? Those are the cabins that I have to visit."

Father Bernard, Captain Annesley and Shilrick had been deeply engrossed in their conversation, and anxious thoughts and hopes concerning the truant Kerry, and enough snow had fallen to deaden the sound of stealthy footsteps. It was, therefore, with a start of horror and consternation that Annesley, on chancing to look round suddenly, discovered that the whole band of Rebels was approaching them, and he judged rightly, by the excited gesticulations and words of the men as they came nearer, that he and his companions had been seen. Escape, in such a place, even had the number of their foes been less, would have been impossible, and foolhardy as it might appear to risk an encounter when the odds were so great against him, Annesley preferred rather to do this, than to attempt an escape which must inevitably end in failure; and, moreover, he belonged to a corps which has never yet been known to retreat before an enemy. There was nothing for it then, but to face the Rebels bravely.

Laying one hand on the hilt of his sword, and with the other drawing the little drummer closer to him, Annesley spoke in low, earnest tones:

"Courage, my boy! In a few moments we shall be surrounded—it is only what I feared might happen; but now, Shilrick, remember, you are a soldier, and *belong to the Marines*. Loyal and true you have ever been, little comrade, but the time is now coming when you may be severely tried. I do not think, however, that you will disgrace the corps in which you and I have the honour to serve. I can trust you, Shilrick?"

The drummer's face was pale, but resolute, and there was a brave, steadfast light in the eyes that were raised to Annesley's, as he replied, earnestly :

"Sure ye can thrust me, Captain darlin', for there isn't a bhoy in it, this dhay, that would care moor for the honour av the ould corps than mesilf."

Even in that moment of peril, Shilrick felt no fear, he thought not of himself, he was only anxious for the safety of Annesley, and grieved that he should have been the means of leading his beloved Captain into this danger.

Great was the distress of Father Bernard at the sudden appearance of the Rebels, but he at once determined to remain—for the present, at least,—with Annesley and Shilrick, in the hope that in his character of priest, he might be able to influence some of "the Bhoys" in their favour.

In a few minutes the Rebel band had surrounded them, swiftly and securely covering every space and opening where retreat might have been possible, all this being done in silence, not a word spoken by either party. At last, however, Morven O'Neill approached Annesley, but started and drew back, with a hurried exclamation, on recognising him :

"Ah!" he cried. "So we have met again, sir! You are indeed bold to come thus within our precincts unarmed and unattended."

"Stay, sir!" returned Annesley, hastily drawing his sword. "I am not unarmed, and—oh!" he exclaimed, suddenly, as he lowered his uplifted arm, and stood gazing in astonishment at O'Neill. "Oh, *Morven O'Neill*! I know you now. I thought that your voice was strangely familiar to me when we last met."

Silently and regretfully the two, who had once been devoted friends and comrades, stood regarding each other. Who shall say what thoughts were passing within the minds of each, what memories had been awakened in their hearts by this unexpected meeting—memories of boyhood's hours together, of true friendship in after life, when hope, joy, and ambition were strong within them. Memories of pleasures shared at home, and of deadly perils bravely borne in some far-off land. Together they had

served side by side, countrymen and brother officers in the same corps, and through all they had proved leal and faithful friends. Then had come separation. And now, after many years—this strange, sad meeting. Once more on their own soil, and on a scene of nature's wildest grandeur, they stood face to face.

The one still a loyal soldier, the other an outlaw from home and country, and under the ban of treason. To all outward appearance they were foes, but within the heart of each, many cherished memory of the past bound them still together with the sacred ties of affection and esteem.

"Annesley," said O'Neill, earnestly, "believe me, it was only at my Cousin Eveleen's desire that I did not make myself known to you on the occasion of our last meeting; because she feared that if others heard the secret of my identity with '*Michael Chumy*,' her father might then learn, by some means, that his nephew's ambition had led him to prefer the love of a grateful country to the injustice of a government which evidently cherishes a secret animosity towards all soldiers who have seen good service, together with a determination to withhold every privilege, every good gift, from our countrymen."

For a moment Annesley did not reply, his thoughts were busy with those words of O'Neill's that concerned Eveleen Corrie. "Have I wronged Eveleen, after all?" he murmured to himself, "did she meet O'Neill as a *cousin* only, or as a *lover*? Oh! could I only believe that she is true to me—my own Eveleen!" Then, turning to Morven, he replied, "Miss Corrie was right, and I would not on any account that our Colonel knew of this, it would indeed fill his brave, loyal heart with the deepest sorrow."

"Our paths in life are wide apart, *now*, Annesley," said O'Neill. "But give me your hand—and let me feel that I have yet the friendship of the one who used to be the companion of my boyhood, and my favourite comrade when we served together in the old corps."

Certain it was, that, come what might, these two leal, true men, could never thrust from out their hearts the affection of a lifetime; but there must be no outward display of friendship between them. Gently, but firmly, therefore,

Annesley put aside the hand offered to him, for it was the hand of one who had once been a soldier, but who was now a rebel, and *he* wore the King's uniform.

"No, Morven O'Neill!" he replied, sorrowfully. "It cannot be! As you have said, our paths through life are indeed wide apart. What friendship could there ever be between a loyal soldier and a rebel? It would be against my most cherished principles. I should feel that I had forgotten my duty, that I was disgracing the commission I hold."

"Be it so, Annesley," returned Morven, coldly, "as there is then no tie of friendship to bind us, there need be no hesitation in arranging a place of meeting for the settlement of that little difference we had on the occasion of our last meeting. But, enough of this just now; Father Bernard, I see, is with you, and," he continued, looking towards Shilrick, "who is your other companion? Why! I see it is Shilrick O'Toole, our little drummer!" he exclaimed. "My boy, I *am* glad to see you once more, though I could have wished that the meeting had been in happier, better times."

Shilrick had been standing near Annesley, earnestly regarding O'Neill, and listening to all that was passing; hearing himself addressed, he came to the front, and spoke eagerly to Morven.

"Oh! Misther O'Neill dear, sure it isn't *yersilf* I see sthandin' forninst me this minute, that's the head av these 'Bould Bhoys!' Och! *wirra, wirra!* How is it yer honour did be comin' among the likes av thim, at all, at all?"

"Ay, Shilrick! you may well ask him *that*," said Annesley. "Oh, Morven! I can scarcely believe that it is my old comrade who is now standing before me, the chief of a band of lawless Rebels."

For the time, Annesley, O'Neill, and even Shilrick seemed to have forgotten that they were at that moment surrounded by these very men; they were at last rudely reminded of the fact, however, by the approach of Thaddeus Magin.

"Now look yer here, stranger," he said, insolently, addressing Annesley, "I guess yer airn't agoin' to be allowed to corrupt our young Captain."

Annesley looked contemptuously at the Yankee and answered, haughtily, "When I speak to *you*, you can reply ;

until then you will be kind enough to remain silent, or at all events refrain from addressing *me*."

"Wa'al now, stranger, that's what *I* call coming it strong—rayther—I guess yer don't know who I am," continued Magin, triumphantly, "I'll enlighten yer then; I'm Lieutenant Thaddeus Magin, the second in command of this 'ere noble battalion. I calc'late I came over from America just for the purpose of seeing if I couldn't help to fix old Ireland right and square agin. What hev yer got to say to *that* now, mister, eh?"

"That we are not indebted to America," replied Annesley, quietly. "Faith I wish that country had kept such an enterprising son to herself. It is *you*, and such men as you, who have ever been the bane of poor old Ireland. You sow and nourish the seeds of discord in hearts that would be naturally happy and contented. You make them fancy many wrongs which were never intended, possibly never even existed, and for those which really do exist you know of no remedy, yet you lead on thousands of trusting hearts, till you bring them to the very lowest depths of misery, poverty, and despair, ay! too often ending in disgrace, and the traitor's doom. You do this, well knowing that those only can be the results of rebellion and civil warfare. I tell you again, that it is such men as you who seek to build up wealth and a meretricious fame for *yourselves* upon the wreck of the ruined hopes and desolate hearths of our people."

"Wa'al!" replied the Yankee, coolly, "I calc'late yer would make a good speaker in the Senate, stranger."

The insolent tone in which these words were spoken, and the look which accompanied them, caused the drummer to clench his hands fiercely. Shilrick was literally trembling with passion.

"Och, Captain darlin'!" he cried excitedly to Annesley. "Sure ye'll let me give him one for *that*, annyhow. Begorra! is it mesilf that has to be after sthandin' quiet an' aisy this minute and hear yer honour insulted?"

Annesley smiled at the boy's eagerness, but laid his hand on his shoulder, saying, as he glanced contemptuously at Magin:

"Let him alone, Shilrick, he isn't worth your notice."

"Thru for ye, sir," said the drummer. "But, oh ! *wouldn't* I like to pitch into him enthirely."

During this discussion neither Annesley nor Shilrick had been forgetful of the purpose which had brought them thither ; both had been anxiously scanning the faces of the Rebels by whom they were surrounded, but Kerry O'Toole was evidently not with the band ; this fact raised their hopes considerably, they thought that he could not yet have taken the oath.

Father Bernard had also been on the watch, but could not discover the truant Kerry among those of the Rebels then present. The good old priest now came forward, determined to seize, when he could, the opportunity of speaking to O'Neill, in the hope of being able to advise and influence him, as well as his wild, lawless followers, against the fatal course they were pursuing. "Morven O'Neill," he said, impressively, "I should have thought that your ambition would have led you to desire a better command, a nobler life than *this*. Oh, my son ! what interest can the half of these men whom you have gathered around you, feel in Ireland and her wrongs."

"They are all devoted heart and soul to '*the cause*,' Father," replied Morven. "They are brave, honourable men."

"Brave, they may be, but their *honour* and their devotion to '*the cause*,' I doubt very much," said Father Bernard, shaking his head, gravely, as he noticed the desperate, and, in some cases, villainous expression on the faces of the men by whom they were surrounded. "A great number of them are Frenchmen and Americans, and there are, to my certain knowledge, Italians, Germans, Spaniards, and Greeks among your band, together with a very fair sprinkling of Scotchmen and Englishmen. I know every secret of this body of men now under your command, and I ask you what interest these foreigners can possibly feel in *our* country and her sorrows ? How can *their* hearts be in the '*noble cause*' as you call it ! There may be a few—ay ! and I fear a *very few*—Irishmen among you who are still infatuated enough to feel some enthusiasm in the movement, but I know well that the greater number are only

secretly delighting in this excuse for rebelling against the established government. There are several of the 'Boys' in your band now, O'Neill—Irishmen, too—whom I know well would follow *any* man who had strength of mind or cunning enough to lead them, whether for good or evil. Poor helpless creatures ! They can only play the same tune as their neighbours, not having the sense nor the ear sufficient to make one for themselves ; there are hundreds, nay thousands, of such men in the ranks of the rebels. Ah ! Andy Rafferty," added Father Bernard, as he chanced to look in the direction of two men, who were trying to keep out of his sight, "and Tim Callaghan, too ; sure, you need not fall behind there, boys, I can see you quite well."

"O'Neill !" said Annesley, earnestly. "In the old days you were often advised by me. Oh ! I pray you, listen to me, now ! Disband these men while there is yet time ; there are few people, except the peasantry, who associate *Michael Cluny*, the Rebel Chief, with *you* ; and *they* will never betray you."

"Oh, yer honour !" pleaded Shilrick, in his eager, boyish voice, "do as the Captain axes ye ; sure, ye'll forgive me for spakin', sir ! 'tis only a poor drummer I am, but, troth ! me heart is warm wid the love an' respect that's in it for yersilf. An' it's cowl'd an' still this heart must be for iver before I'd forgit what yer honour done for me whin ye were in the sarvice."

"Ah !" replied Morven, kindly, as he laid both hands upon the shoulders of the drummer, while the rare, beautiful smile that had been wont to charm all with whom he came in contact, seemed to illumine his face. "Then, my boy, I have yet *one* friend who thinks kindly of me."

"Oh ! *Ua Néill ! Ua Néill !*" cried Shilrick, mournfully. "Come back to us agin' ; sure there's not a bhoys in the ould corps but would recave yer honour wid the smile in his eyes, an' the cheer on his lips."

"Shilrick, that is impossible," replied O'Neill. "I can never more return to my comrades and the old life, for I resigned my commission, and have left the service for all time, but I thank you for your words, my boy, they will help to cheer me when I am sad and lonely."

Once more Father Bernard made an attempt to influence the Rebels.

"My boys!" he cried, earnestly. "Think well before you move farther in this serious matter. Pause, I beseech you, ere you take another step for the cause which can never succeed—ere you bring down upon your heads the judgment of Heaven; for as sure as you stand before me living men, so sure will you not be held blameless of the bloodshed and the devastation that must inevitably follow, to the misery alike of the innocent and the guilty."

"Oh, Father Bernard!" said O'Neill, his voice full of deepest emotion, as he solemnly pointed to the glowing sunset which was then at its brightest. "Look yonder! See you not that glorious sunset, dyeing every rock, hill and tree with its gorgeoues orang, purple and red, its brilliant rays, like golden showers, penetrating every wood, glen and valley of our beauteous Emerald Isle? Think you that such a sun was ever meant to shed its charms o'er a sorrowing land, only to mock us by the intensity of its glory? Ah, no! surely it is sent rather as a promise that a day is not far distant, when the sad wail of grief that flows straight from the very hearts of our people will be turned into one long triumphant shout of joy, the blessed sound fading away again, not to the sad, mournful tones of former days, but to the low, sweet cadence of perfect peace and happiness, music that will find an echo in every Irish heart. Oh, Erin! Erin! beloved country! is it possible that there exists even *one* of thy sons who could look with cold indifference upon a cause that was to attain such an end?"

"Ah, Morven!" said the priest, sadly. "The end you speak of will *never* be accomplished by the means you are now employing. Oh, my son! you are but causing more strife and bloodshed."

"I believe that the steps we are now taking *will* be of lasting good to our country, sir," replied O'Neill, coldly, "otherwise I am not the man to have taken part in the movement."

"Now then, Captain!" again interrupted Magin, rudely, "I guess yer hev all been talkin' long enough, we've had as good as three sermons. The old riverend gent can keep the

rest of his discourse till he's in the pulpit. We can't stop here all night speechifyin' an' argyfyin'; I calc'late we'd better be on the move."

"Yes! when I give my orders," returned O'Neill, haughtily. "And now, Annesley, before you leave this spot you must, with Father Bernard and Shilrick, give us your word that you will not betray us. I know well that I can trust you all to keep the pledge I ask of you. For the safety of my men and myself I must have that pledge."

There was a dark, vindictive frown on Magin's brow as he now interfered, and, drawing O'Neill aside for a few moments, he spoke quickly and angrily, but in a voice so well suppressed that even those who were nearest to him could hear but little. "I tell you that Captain Annesley must go free," was O'Neill's reply to the Yankee, "he was one of my best and truest friends in the old corps; besides, as you well know, he saved my life a few weeks ago."

"I know it, cuss him!" muttered Magin to himself. "That's so, Captain," he answered, in his usual tones, "but I guess the lives of all this 'ere band airn't to be endangered on that score. Boys!" he continued, addressing some of the Rebels who stood near. "If yer value yer precious lives don't let that thar Marine officer nor the drummer escape." Then again he murmured to himself, "I calc'late I'll find some way of clippin' this young stranger's wings, he airn't goin' to steal the bullet out of my gun again as he did last time by savin' O'Neill's life. I'll give information to the authorities that one of their officers an' the Irish drummer is in league with the Rebels."

By this time O'Neill had returned to Annesley and Shilrick, who were anxiously awaiting the result of his hurried conference with Magin.

"Annesley!" he said, "I regret to say that for the present you and Shilrick O'Toole must consider yourselves our prisoners. Father Bernard! *you* are free to go where you will, when we have your word that you will not betray us, or say aught of the presence of Annesley and Shilrick."

"O'Neill! this is nonsense! madness!" exclaimed Annesley, in consternation, as all the consequences of their detention rapidly passed through his mind. "I *must* return to

barracks to-night, and Shilrick, also ; we are both on special duty to-morrow. I will certainly pledge myself to secrecy *under the circumstances*, and I have never yet broken my word."

"Annesley," replied O'Neill, sorrowfully but firmly, "I am truly sorry that you have crossed our path to-night. Were it for myself alone, you should go free, for I know that I can trust you ; but I have the wishes of my men to study, and the oaths of our brotherhood prevent one, even though he be the leader, from acting without the unanimous consent of the whole band. I would most willingly let you go, and Shilrick, too, but the others will not have it so."

"No ; I should rayther guess not !" chimed in Magin, "we ain't such fools as yer seem to think."

While O'Neill again turned aside to speak to Magin, Annesley, in a low voice, hastily gave some directions to the drummer.

"Quick, my boy ; at the first opportunity, slip in between the men, and away ! Give information at the barracks that I am a prisoner in the hands of the Rebels."

"Oh, but, yer honour !" cried the boy, in the greatest distress, "I can't—oh, don't ax me to lave ye, sir."

"Not a word more," said Annesley, impatiently, "but go ! You might escape without notice, when I could not. It is our only chance."

"But, sir, sure—"

"If you do not do as I tell you, it will be thought at the barracks that we have both deserted and joined the Rebels."

"I'll do it, sir," answered the boy, bravely, the terrible thought of being called a traitor making him at once alive to the necessity of following Annesley's orders, though he felt deeply having to leave his officer alone with the enemy, it seemed as if he were deserting him ; however, there was nothing for it but to obey the Captain, and he therefore set his mind to watch anxiously for the desired opportunity.

"You need fear neither rudeness nor violence, Annesley," said O'Neill, as he again returned to the officer. "I shall take good care of that. Father Bernard, you are at liberty to go, if you will. Shilrick, you must come with us."

"I shall not leave Captain Annesley, Morven," replied the priest, determinedly.

"As you will, sir," returned O'Neill, bowing respectfully.

The drummer, raising his hat for a moment, dropped on one knee before Father Bernard, and in a low voice asked, and received, a few words of blessing from the aged pastor, then, rising quickly, and drawing his sword, he contrived to pass between the men, who, being thus taken by surprise, were for an instant at a loss how to act.

"After him! after him! some of yer," shouted Magin, "what do yer all mean, standin' gapin' there instead of followin' the boy."

By this time Shilrick had fairly got the start of them, but he was closely pursued by several of the rebels. His knowledge of the mountains, however, and the fact of his being so sure-footed, gave him an advantage over his followers.

"Wa'al! I guess that thar boy goes like a hare, but he'll be caught up in time, and it'll only be the worse for him, giving all this tarnation trouble," remarked Magin, as he scowled at Annesley. "And now, Captain," he continued, addressing O'Neill, "I calc'late we'd best be startin'; unless we're to be fixed in this 'ere spot all night and hev another sermon to revigorate us."

"Silence!" commanded O'Neill, sternly. "I can give my orders without your interference."

"Oh, foolish, foolish boy!" said Father Bernard, sorrowfully, to O'Neill. "You will rue this step bitterly some day; you are travelling swiftly, and surely, on the road to destruction; and, when too late, my son, you will find that all the reparation you can offer, all the sacrifices you can make, will not blot out the one great error of your young life. Morven!" he continued, earnestly, "you used to come to me for instruction, and for advice, in your boyhood; listen to me now, while there is yet time. Ah! little did I think that the lessons I gave you in childhood, would be so utterly disregarded when you had reached manhood's years."

"Father!" replied O'Neill, respectfully. "It is late now, I cannot remain longer. Another time I shall be glad to listen to all that you have to say to me, for I know well that the words you speak come straight from a heart that has ever been full of affection and kindness for myself and those

who were dearest to me." He raised his hat courteously to the priest, and then turned to the Rebels.

"Are you ready, boys?"

"I guess we've been that a pretty considerable time, Captain," answered Magin. "Now, boys! surround yer prisoners!" he added. "There airn't no signs yet of those darned dunderheads comin' back with the boy. Ah! here's two of them!" he exclaimed, as Phelim O'Flanigan and Andy Rafferty slowly approached.

"Wa'al! whar's the boy?" he asked.

"The sorra sight av him could we see," answered O'Flanigan, sullenly.

"Sure we couldn't kape up wid him, at all, at all, so we couldn't," said Rafferty.

"Or *wouldn't!*" returned Magin, with a sneer.

In which supposition the Yankee was decidedly correct, for in addition to the inherent laziness of the two men, there was the fact that the drummer was a countryman of their own; they knew him well, for the youthful soldier had always been a favourite with the peasantry in the neighbourhood.

"Like enough he'll be caught up by the other boys," said Magin, while the cruel, sinister expression on his face boded ill for the fate of the poor lad if he were taken. "I calc'late if yer hev all been such darned fools as to let him slip through yer fingers, yer'll have all the militairy gentlemen in Wicklow after yer, pretty slick, that's all. However, he didn't see where we locate ourselves, that's lucky. Now then, Captain! we're ready," he added, seeing that his order had been obeyed, and that Father Bernard and Annesley were surrounded by a powerful guard.

"Fours right! Quick march!" cried O'Neill, in genuine military tones; then, turning to Magin, he said, "Thaddeus Magin! Take the command, lead the boys to the cave. *I* will have nought to do with making these two gentlemen prisoners."

With these words he turned away from them, and stood anxiously gazing in the opposite direction, wondering if Shilrick had escaped, fervently hoping that he might do so.

Thaddeus Magin was careful to keep a strict watch on Annesley, as they proceeded to the cave, being under the

apprehension that some of the Irishmen among the Rebel band, who had known and liked Kerry O'Toole's foster brother, might effect his escape.

"I warn you that you will pay dearly for this night's work," said Annesley, on seeing who was beside him. "It would have been better for you to have let us go free."

"Would it?" returned Magin, as he paused, and placed himself in an insolent attitude in front of Annesley. "Would it?" he repeated. "Do you think *I* look like a fool, stranger?"

"Well, no," replied Annesley, quietly; "and since you ask the direct question, I will give you the direct answer that—if you are not the thorough-paced and unmitigated scoundrel I take you for—then your looks and your actions belie you—that is all."

With a malignant scowl, Magin drew back, and once more returned to his place.

"O'Neill!" said Annesley, sorrowfully, as he passed Morven. "Whatever wrongs I had suffered, whatever grief was in my heart, I should never have sunk so low as *this*; for what is your position now? The leader of a few lawless peasants, the daily companion of such a man as this Magin."

"Oh, Annesley! Annesley! why did you come here?" was the mournful reply, as the young Rebel Chief buried his face in his hands, to hide from his old comrade the grief he could no longer control. Sadly, Annesley glanced back at the tall, lonely form standing on an elevated point, appearing in grand relief against the sky, now darkening fast behind the grey veil of the gloaming. "Poor O'Neill!" he murmured. "I fear that sad indeed must be your fate in the future, dear old friend."

Annesley was roused suddenly from the reverie into which he had fallen while on the way to the Rebel's Cave, by a light touch on his arm, and on looking round, he discovered Silas Charleston at his side.

"One good turn deserves another," said the young American, hurriedly, and in a low whisper, "keep up your heart, stranger. I guess yer don't remember me?" he asked.

"Why !" replied Annesley, "of course I do. It was you who so gallantly came to the rescue of O'Neill that night when—"

"Why certainly ! I guess I *was* around then," was the quiet response.

"Stay !" said Annesley, still in the same low tones, as the American seemed about to move away from him. "My foster-brother, Kerry O'Toole. ?"

"Is safe and well," interrupted Charleston, hastily. "He has joined us now. I guess you'll see him before long."

"Wa'al" said Magin, as he suddenly appeared at the side of Charleston. "What air yer talkin' about to the prisoners, eh? What were yer sayin', Silas Charleston?"

"I wasn't *saying* much, but as I told you before, I *think* a deal."

"How dare yer speak in that way to *me*? Just remember that I'm Lieutenant Thaddeus Magin, second in command of this 'ere battalion."

"That's so," replied Charleston, "and, if we don't remember, I guess it airn't for want of being reminded ; but what's that to me—to any of us? Hevn't you yourself talked to us, and lectured us, till you were dry in the mouth, sayin' that natur had intended we should all be brothers and equals? Hevn't you promised to make us all gentlemen of property and position, mister? Oh ! you needn't stand scowling at me, *I* am not afraid of you, *Lieutenant Thaddeus Magin*, I guess I could take you up with one hand, and land you in that abyss yonder if I were inclined, and I warn you that *that* inclination is coming on me now, mister."

Magin well knew that the words of his young countryman were true enough. In his early youth, one of the many varied callings that Silas Charleston had adopted to gain a precarious livelihood, had been that of acrobat. His lithe, graceful figure had received good training, and this, together with great muscular power, rendered him a formidable antagonist. In this instance, therefore, as on every former occasion, Thaddeus Magin, considering that discretion was the better part of valour, silently withdrew from the conflict, allowing himself, however, the full luxury of *looking* the feelings he dare not otherwise express.

By this time, the rebels, with their prisoners, had reached the entrance to the cave.

The party had first to descend into a deep hollow, which was literally surrounded by a natural wall formed by the rocky mountain sides ; in one of these a rough door had been formed, but this was so dexterously covered and concealed with earth, sand, and the roots of heather, which had by some means been plastered and fixed upon it, as to render it perfectly indiscernible to any unaccustomed eye.

It was most improbable that any chance wayfarers, had they been ever such enthusiastic mountain-climbers, would have descended into the hollow at all, for it was most difficult and perilous of access, but even had they done so, it would have been almost impossible for them to discover the entrance to the celebrated cave—the Rebels' home.

As they were about to enter, Silas Charleston once more approached Annesley, and whispered :

“Stranger ! I have said that one good turn deserves another. If I can contrive your escape, I can trust to your honour—is it so ? You will give me your word that you will not betray us ?”

“I will,” replied Annesley, earnestly, “you may trust me.”

CHAPTER XXX.

“ He was the first always : Fortune
Shone bright in his face.
I fought for years ; with no effort
He conquered the place ;
We ran ; my feet were all bleeding,
But he won the race.

My home was still in the shadow,
His lay in the sun ;
I longed in vain ; what he asked for
It straightway was done.
Once I staked all my heart's treasure,
We played and he won.”

ADELAIDE A. PROCTER.

For some moments after the departure of the rebels with their prisoners, O'Neill still remained standing where they had left him.

“ Oh, Annesley ! ” he again repeated, sadly, “ why did you come here—what unlucky fate brought you to the mountains to-night ? I am well-nigh powerless to save you. I could do much with the Boys if it were not for that American, Thaddeus Magin. I am often suspicious of him, I feel sure he would do me an injury if it were in his power, but one thing is certain, Annesley must be rescued,” he continued, determinedly, “ I must keep the boys well employed for a few days, and as much as possible away from the cave. Meanwhile, I shall try and arrange some plan for his release and trust to chance and my own devices to find the means of carrying it out. Ah ! I had forgotten Annesley's foster brother, Kerry O'Toole, has now joined us, he may possibly be able to assist me.”

Suddenly the thought flashed across O'Neill's mind that he

had done wrong in not accompanying the rebels to the cave, as it was possible that Magin might offer Annesley and the priest some rudeness, or indignity, he therefore hastened after them with all speed.

Meanwhile, Kerry O'Toole, who had been hidden from view by a projecting rock, now appeared upon the scene. He had heard O'Neill's soliloquy, and had gathered from it the fact that his foster brother was in the hands of the rebels, and in danger.

"Armoric Annesley! me own fosther brother—a prisoner!" he cried, anxiously. "An' I hear Misther O'Neill sayin' he is powerless to save him, an' must thrust to chance to relase him. Oh, Armoric, wisha! how is it he came here, at all, at all? Sure 'tis that blackguard Magin will have ye murdered enthirely before annythin' can be done. But I'll save ye yet Armoric. However great the dhangers an' the difficulties, ye shall be rescued."

Kerry was just about to follow in the direction taken by Morven O'Neill, when he was startled by hearing his name spoken in a low, cautious whisper, and on turning to see who had addressed him he found himself face to face with his brother Shilrick.

"Kerry!" cried the drummer, softly.

"Oh, Shilrick! is it yersilf, *ma bouchaleen*," exclaimed Kerry, anxiously. "Sure ye mustn't sthoph here now. I'd niver have axed ye to mate me in this place if I'd known 'the Bhoys' iver came this way. They've jist left, darlin' an'—"

"Whist! whist! I know that, Kerry. An' it's mesilf was thaken prisoner, but faith they didn't know how to kape *me*. I slipped through their fingers like an aal, an' hid away till I sane what they were afther; the Bhoys followed, but I thurned aff shoort an' widout knowin' it, they passed the very place where I was hidin' twice. Thin, whin they'd thired av huntin' afther me an' had gone away, I came out av me hole an' was goin' on back to barracks but I sane yersilf comin' here an' followed ye. I came first to the mountains wid his honour Captain Annesley, d'ye see, Kerry."

"But what brought the Captain here, at all, at all, Shilrick?" asked Kerry.

"Troth he came afther *yersilf*, *Kerry*, *wisha*. An' oh sure it's wantin' yez to lave the Ribils we are, now, *at wanst*, before it's too late. An' his honour bein' mighty good at persuasion, we thought maybe's ye'd listhen to *him*; an' that's how *he* came to be here. I know 'tis no use *mesilf* spakin' to ye; though 'tis ill enough ye're kapin' the promise ye made to our mother that's gone—rest her sowl—whin ye tould her ye'd watch over mesilf an' see that I'd come to no harm. Sure 'tis an illigant example ye're showin' me *this thime*, annyhow, forbye lavin' me alone in the world wid sorra wan to thake an intherest in what becomes av me, at all, at all."

"Ye'll niver be alone while Captain Annesley is alive, sure didn't he always promise he'd kape an eye on ye, an' guard ye from harm, Shilrick, *gille machree*?"

"Kape an eye on me, is it!" exclaimed Shilrick, disdainfully. "Sure what intherest is it ye can think he'd have in kapin' an eye on the brother av a *Ribil*? 'Tis agin the sarvice it would be for him to do it. Oh, *Kerry*!" continued the boy, with emotion, "it's no good can iver come av what ye're doin', an' the life ye're ladin' now. Oh! say that ye'll lave these wild Bhoys an' come back to yer home an' yer honest work agin."

"No, Shilrick, I'll niver do that," replied Kerry, obstinately, "an' 'tis useless, either yersilf or Misther Armoric thryin' to persuade me. Sure, it's aisy for ye to get on widout me now, for 'tis yersilf that's the good, well-doin' bhoy, enthirely."

"Is it the good conduct ye're spakin' av? Oh, *Kerry*! where is the good that would be in it to mesilf if I'd me two arms covered from the wrist to the showl'dher wid the good conduct sthripes, whin I've a brother that's a *thraitor*. Ah, *Kerry*! ye sthart—ye frown—sure' 'tis yersilf that doesn't like the word; but 'tis just what ye are this minute, my brother, an' niver a lie in it. *Och, wirra! wirra!* did I iver think the dhay would dhawn that would see yer own mother's son in such a plight!" cried the boy, sadly. "*You a thraitor!* Oh, *Kerry*! *Kerry*! sure ye've spoilt my life, too, as well as yer own, wid yer wild divarshions; isn't it the mistrust that ivery officer an' man in the ould

corps will have for mesilf now, when I've a brother that's wid the Ribils? Sure they'll maybes be too kind to let me see what they'd be thinkin', but it'll be in their hearts for all that, and I'll *fale* it—an' I'll *know* it."

"An' if I do be thinkin' that what I'm doin' is right?" demanded Kerry, as he placed his arm around Shilrick's shoulder, and looked down, kindly, at the earnest face of his little brother.

"Ah, but ye *don't* think that way, sorra bit, Kerry," answered Shilrick, eagerly. "*I* know ye better. It's the wild passion that's burnin' widin ye avin yet, an' ladin' ye on to destruction, but when that's passed, oh! sure it's the heavy heart ye'll have. But ye'll not sthop here, Kerry darlin', ye'll come back wid me now. Och, sure ye'll lave these Bhoys at wanst, and help to save his honour, the Captain."

"Begorrah, Shilrick!" exclaimed Kerry, impatiently. "Is it yersilf that's sane many a year less than I have, an' only a bit av a gossoon yet, that would be settin' up for a tacher to yer mother's ildest son? I tell ye wanst an' for all, I've chosen this life. I'm here av me own free will, an' I'll not lave it. 'Tis av no use spakin' anny moor about it, an' it's too late ye are, Shilrick, annyhow—for I've just thaken the oath av the brotherhood."

"Too late! too late!" cried the drummer, starting back in horror. "Oh, Kerry, sure ye can't mane this in thruth!"

"I *do* mane it," returned Kerry, sullenly.

"Oh, *wirrasthrue! wirrasthrue!*" murmured the boy, despairingly. "If we'd only known av this bafore, an' come sooner."

"It would have been no use thin, nayther," said Kerry, gloomily. "I'd made up me mind long ago, an' sure it's yersilf that knows well enough—or ought to know by this thime—that whin wanst I've said or dethermined on annythin, I'll hould to it. An d'ye think I'd go back now?" he continued, passionately. "D'ye think *I'm* the bhoys to stand by quiet, an' paeable an' see Malloy's happiness with Thalia Coghlan?"

"Sure I wouldn't have left the falde clare for himself, annyhow, Kerry," replied Shilrick, sagely. "Hadh't ye all as wan the same chance as Sheymus? If yer heart was so

set on the colleen why did ye go away and lave her to him ? Why is it ye didn't sthay an' fight it out bravely, like a man ? ”

“ An' is it yersilf would have had me to sthay an' see *him* gain the victory ? Hasn't he always an' iver done that ? ” demanded Kerry, jealously. “ Aven whin we were little gossoons together, an' purty aquil in regard av manes an' sthation, whativer we'd thry *he* was always the winner—he always prospered—it's the good luck was wid iverythin' he did, but misforthune an' failure has always been *my* companions. But I niver envied the bhoy—niver ontill he'd sthollen from me the wan heart's threashure, on which I'd sthaked me life's happiness. He won there, too. An', Shilrick,” he added, fiercely, his hands clenched, and a passionate gleam in his eyes, “ I tell ye it's the dark murdher there'd have been on *my* sowl, if I'd sthayed to see thim together.”

“ An' all for a wretched, miserable, worthless colleen,” returned Shilrick, indignantly, “ a colleen that doesn't deserve the love av anny throe-hearted, honest bhoy ; sure, I do be wondherin' where her sinses had flown to, at all, at all, whin she'd look past yersilf, Kerry, an' where *yours* are now, that ye'd still be houldin' on to her,” added the drummer, as he glanced admiringly at his brother.

“ Whin ye're oulder, Shilrick, ye'll maybes know what it is to be in love wid some colleen *yersilf*,” remarked Kerry, gravely.

“ Faith I hope not ! ” was the energetic reply. “ Sure there niver was anny throuble yet an' the *colleens* not in it. Wasn't it Adam himself that was peaceful an' contint in Aden, ontill Ave came wid her divarshions to bother him enthirely ? ”

“ Shilrick ! ” commenced Kerry, reprovingly, but sorrowful and anxious as he was at the time, his gravity was not proof against the words, and the comical expression of his younger brother's face. He broke into a hearty, merry laugh, which, for the moment, chased away all the sullen gloom from his brow, and he appeared once more the bright, handsome Kerry of happier days.

“ An' as to bein' in love ! ” scornfully continued this youth-

ful son of Mars, heedless of the interruption, "sure *that* sames to bring plinty sorrow an' throuble to thim that's in it, annyhow. There's yersilf, Kerry, what has it done for ye, at all, at all? Hasn't it made a Ribil av ye an' placed ye in a position that ye daurn't scarce show yer face in the light av dhay? Sure it's all *love* that's done it," said the boy, sighing, and shaking his head solemnly. "There's Sheymus Malloy was as ill-nathured an' bothered enthirely if annywan spoke to him, bekase he loved Thalia Coghlan, an' thought at that thime that she cared moor for yersilf; an' there was Thalia herself that loved wan av ye, an' didn't same to be able to tell which it was, ontill she thought ye were drowned an' hadn't left her anny other choice—the decateful colleen! Thin isn't there Anty Kinahan in throuble by raison that she's in love wid Owen Maguire, an' her mother won't hear av it, havin' sit *her* mind on Sheymus Malloy for Anty. An' last of all, there's somethin' wrong betwane Miss Eveleen Corrie an' Captain Annesley."

"Sure, what call have ye to be watchin' yer betthers?" demanded Kerry, reprovingly.

"I sane it all widout watchin'," replied Shilrick, quietly. "They've been dhriftin', dhriftin' farther and farther away from ache other this long thime past. Sure 'tis ivery wan in the barracks sane it as well as mesilf. Aren't we, ivery sowl av us, attached to the Colonel an' his family—long may they reign. An' isn't it the Captain that's dearest to me in all the world, barrin' yersilf, Kerry, *wisha*? An' it's the eyes av love that sees quickest. The Captain's proud, d'ye see, an' Miss Corrie's proud—small blame to thim—an' betwane the two there'll be mischief. Sure, we'd all been lookin' forward to the widdin', but now I'm feared it's sorra widdin' there'll be."

"An' how do ye know all this, Shilrick?" inquired Kerry, wonderingly.

"D'ye think I'm blind!" asked the drummer, impatiently. "It's only a few days ago since I sane Miss Corrie crassin' the barrack square, an' the Captain met her; but insthead av walkin' on wid her as he would have done before, he made a bow fit for an Emp'ror, an' troth maybes his honour didn't

make the plume in his hat swape the ground in an illigant manner enthirely."

"An' what did her ladyship do then?" asked Kerry, eagerly, who despite his reproof to Shilrick was now himself deeply interested in the account of the meeting between the young officer and his lady love.

"Faith she wasn't far behind him," said Shilrick, "an' looked all as wan as if she'd been returnin' the bow av his Majesty at the Coort. *Och, faraoir, faraoir!* 'tis all love and misondersthandin' that's doin' it enthirely. Sure I do be thinkin' that 'tis sorrow comes soon enough, widout yer all axin' it to pay ye a visit."

"Sure it's yersilf that shouldn't be spakin' about what ye're too young to ondersthand, Shilrick, *ma bouchaleen,*" remarked Kerry, gravely.

"Whither I'm too young, or no, I'll have me say annyhow," returned the drummer, determinedly. "An' I'll tell yez now, Kerry, before I lave ye—if it's mesilf that had been in *your* place, I'd have used ivery power that was in me to make mesilf *betther* an' not *woorse*. I'd have thried to be moor worthy av the love av some good throe-hearted colleen, to let Thalia Coghlan see the fine bhoy she'd lost enthirely."

"Maybes it's yersilf that's right, Shilrick," replied Kerry, thoughtfully. "Sure I niver thought av that bafore."

"Av coorse ye didn't, bekase 'tis always hasty ye are, the sorra wan I know is fit to hould the candle to ye for havin' a thimper that's as light as a coork, 'tis so aisy raised, an' the Captain isn't far behind ye. Troth I hope his honour won't be afther drownin' *himsilf* some dhay an' lettin' that *upsthart bodagh* from the cavalry barracks take his place."

"D'ye mane a young Dragoon officer called Rochfort! Is he still goin' afther Miss Corrie!" asked Kerry, anxiously.

"He's niver away from her," was the reply.

"Then woorse luck to him, or anny other that comes betwane Armoric an' the wan he loves!" murmured Kerry, threateningly.

"Throe for ye! He'll not thake the braaze out av *our* Captain's sails for nothin'. An' now, Kerry, I must lave ye, I've sthayed too long as it is; but before I go I want to ax what ye're goin' to do for Captain Annesley!"

"He must be rescued."

"Ay! but how?"

"Ye must give information at the barracks about him at wanst, whin ye get back."

"An' troth I don't know how I'll do it. I can't *thurn informer*," said the drummer, determinedly.

"An' there's no nade that ye should," returned Kerry, "say no moor than that the Captain is safe enough, an' will soon return to barracks to spake for himself. I'll see that no harm comes to *him* while he is wid us. I'll get Misther O'Neill to give ordhers that mesilf an' Owen Maguire, or Silas Charleston is to kape guard on the prisoners, and we'll find some manes for thim to escape. An' as to the souldiers, troth they may come afther us ofthen enough, but the mountains is a wide word; the milithairey has scoured thim hondreds av thimes in pickets, but sorra wan av 'the Bhoys' have they sane for their throuble; 'tis all as wan as lookin' for a nadle in a bun'le av hay, as to sake for *Ua Néill* an' his followers among the Wicklow Mountains. Ye're to say no moor than that *the Captain is safe*. D'ye mind!"

"Sure enough I'll mind, but 'tis a sorry business, entirely. An' it'll not be enough to say *he's safe*, Kerry, they'll be axin moor quistions at barracks, an' the Captain, himself, tould me to say he was a prisoner, or they'd be thinkin' he'd deserted, an' joined the Ribils."

"I didn't think av that, Shilrick, but, sure, ye must do as he tould ye. Only ye can say to the other Marine officers that there's those among 'the Bhoys' that'll contrhieve his escape, an' that if *no stheps are thaken by the milithairey*, they'll soon have the Captain safe back agin."

"An' sure is it yersilf that thinks *I* can be givin' me ordhers, what all the milithairey in Wicklow are to be afther doin' or not doin', as if I'd be the Commander-in-Chafe? But there, I'll do the best I can, Kerry," said the boy, very seriously, for he knew that difficult indeed would be the task before him, between his unwillingness to "*inform*," and his desire to rescue Annesley from the hands of the rebels. "Good-night, Kerry," he added, sorrowfully. "Oh! sure, I wish I hadn't to lave ye like this."

"The top av the avenin' to ye, Shilrick, *gille machree*,"

said Kerry, tenderly, as he pressed the boy's hands lovingly in his. "Heaven spaad ye on yer way, an' my best bliss-in's be wid ye."

Slowly the drummer wended his way down the rugged mountain side, pausing once to look upward at Kerry, who was watching him with a sad, yearning expression in his dark, earnest eyes.

"It'll be late an' quite dark before he gets into barracks," murmured Kerry, anxiously, to himself. "May all good be about him ! Poor little gossoon ! sure 'tis heavy his heart is wid sorrow this night ; but, oh ! I pray it may niver be filled wid a dark despair like mine. Bright, thrue-hearted bhoy ! Heaven grant that his path through life may be wan av pace an' happiness. Now I must see my fosther brother at wanst, for sure I'll not rest night nor dhay until I find some manes av settin' him free."

At last, darkness and distance hid Shilrick from the lingering, anxious gaze of his brother, and Kerry then turned and proceeded in the direction taken by the rebels.

Poor Shilrick !—brave little soldier ! surely his good angel must have been very far away from him that night. There was no one near to whisper a word of warning—no instinct told Kerry O'Toole that the little brother who was so dear to him was at that moment in deadly peril.

Shilrick had hurried on, being anxious to reach barracks as soon as possible. He had arrived at a dangerous spot, near the edge of a precipice, the snow had partially covered the ground, and so concealed certain points where there were loose rocks and stones. One of these rocks gave way beneath him, and, in striving to regain his balance, his foot slipped and he fell. There was no word—no sound—for, in falling, his head had struck against a rock, and he rolled over into the abyss beneath, where he lay silent and still as death, with the darkness of night fast gathering around him. Hours after, the pale, cold moonlight shone pitilessly down upon the unconscious form, and the pallid, but beautiful face of the little drummer, and seemed to glance with a mocking light upon the boy's red coat and glittering accoutrements.

From the position in which he had fallen he appeared as

if in calm, peaceful sleep ; his head resting on his arm, and with one hand outstretched. A small, childish hand, yet one which had already done good service in the cause of King and Country—one which had proved kind, gentle, and helpful to many a weary, wounded comrade.

In Glencree Barracks there were many anxious watchers that night for the return of Captain Annesley and Shilrick O'Toole ; for the young officer was very popular, and the drummer was the pet and the pride of the corps. But, alas ! they waited and watched in vain, little dreaming that Annesley was a prisoner in the hands of one of the most daring and lawless of the rebel bands, and that poor little Shilrick lay cold and still, at the foot of a lonely mountain gorge.

END OF VOLUME I.

“ The world is all a fleeting show
For man’s illusion given ;
The smiles of joy, the tears of woe,
Deceitful shine, deceitful flow,
There’s nothing true but Heaven !

“ Poor wanderers of a stormy day,
From wave to wave we’re driven,
And fancy’s flash and reason’s ray
Serve but to light the troubled way,
There’s nothing calm but Heaven ! ”

MOORE.





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